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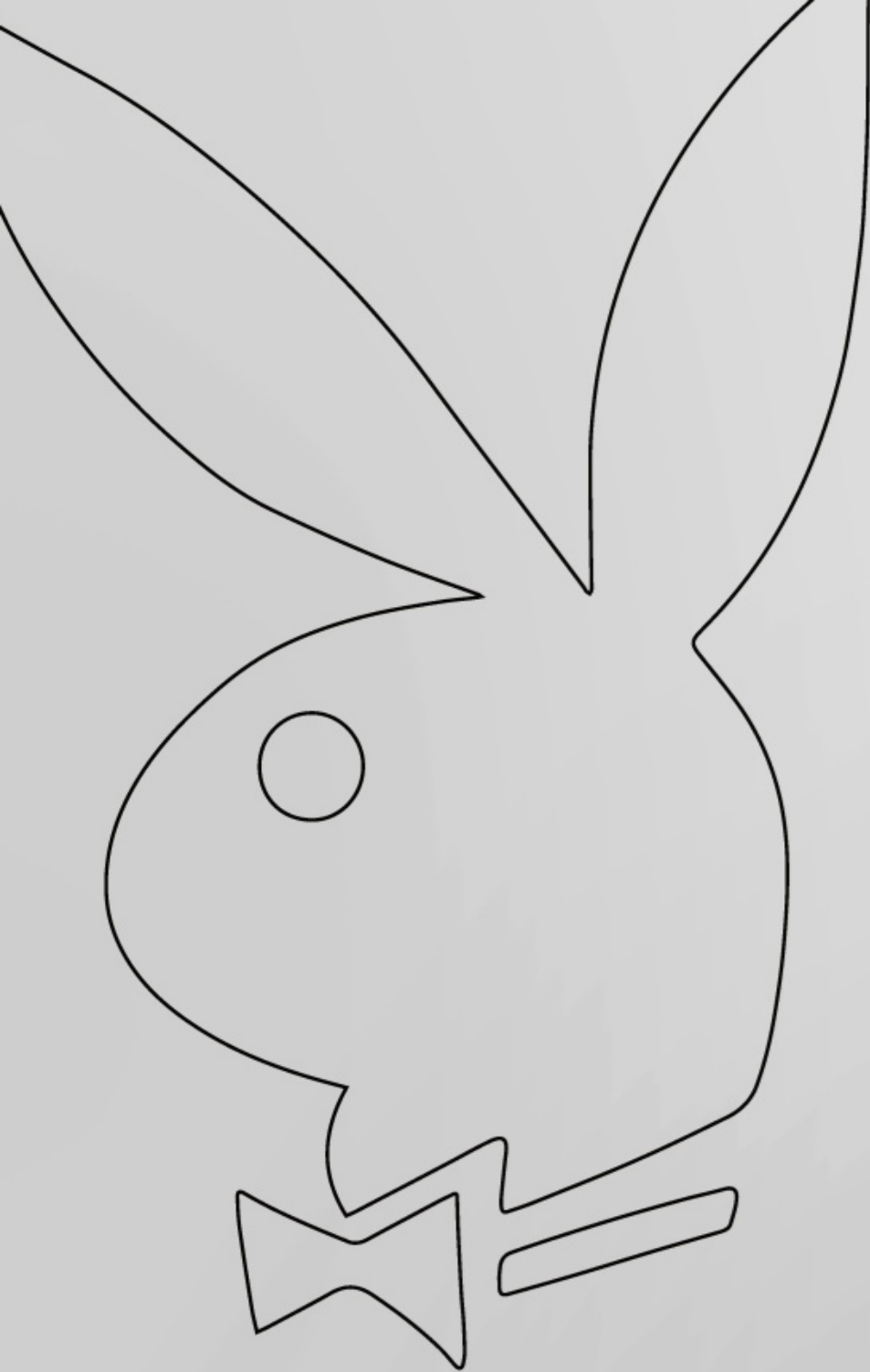
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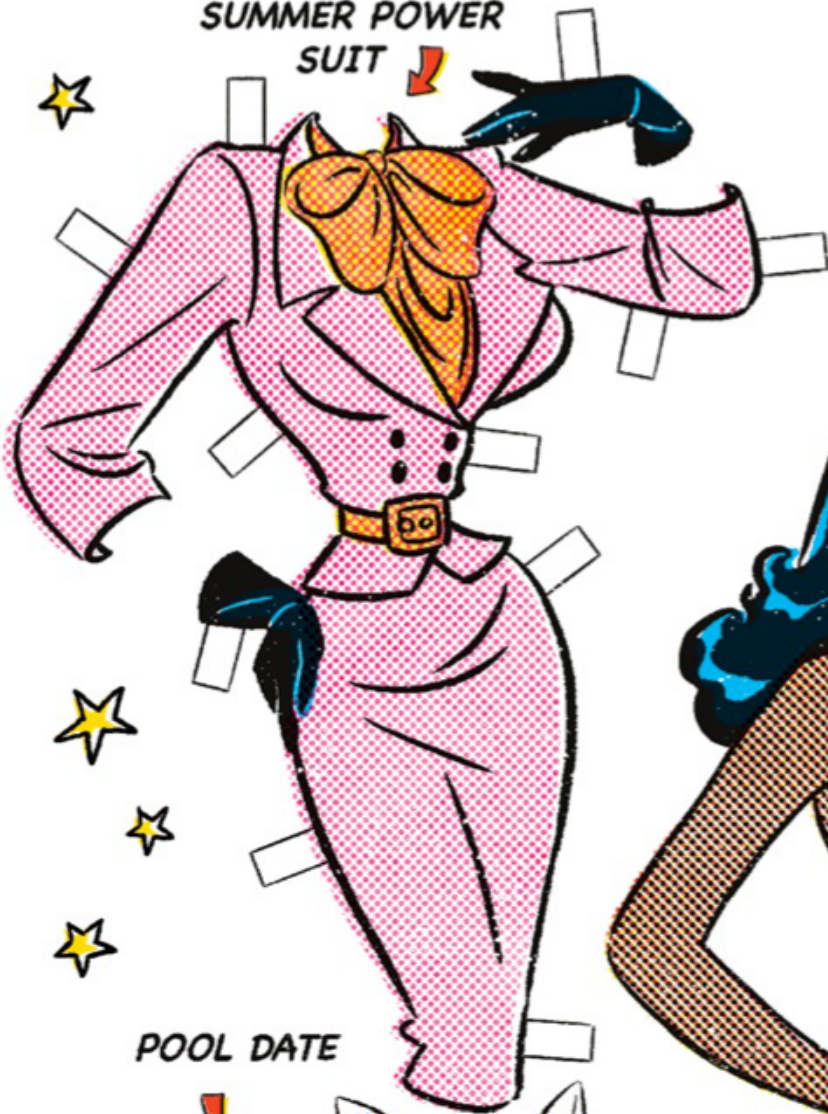


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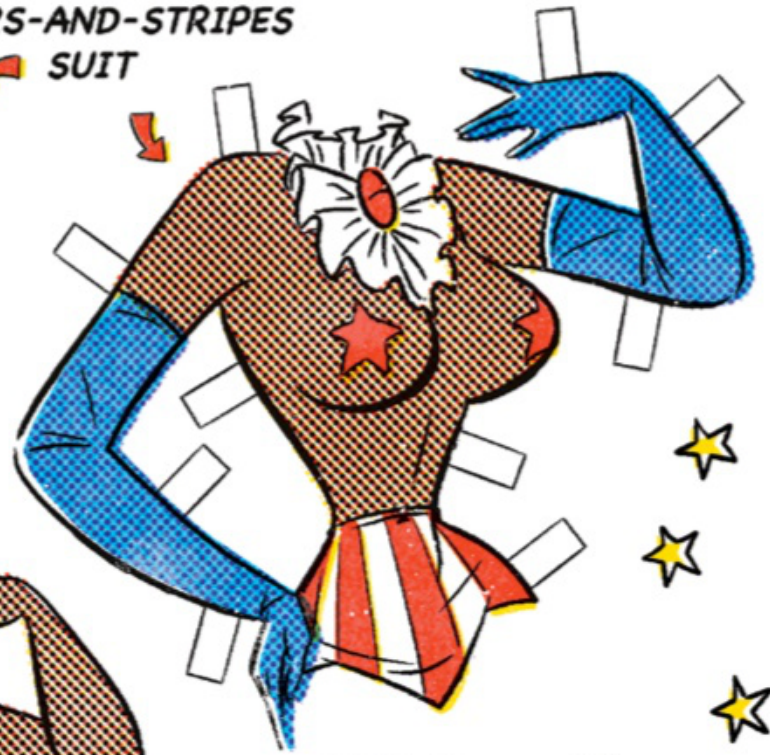
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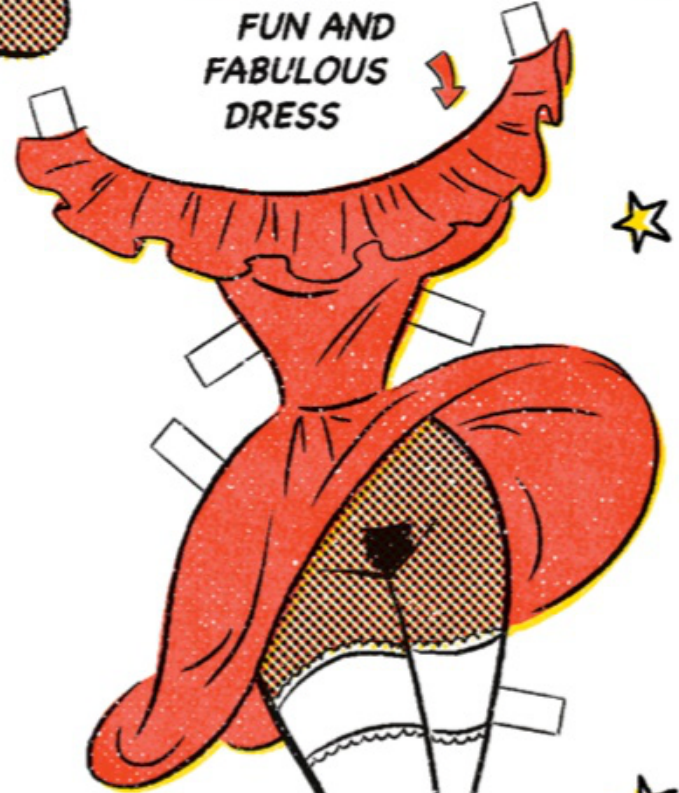
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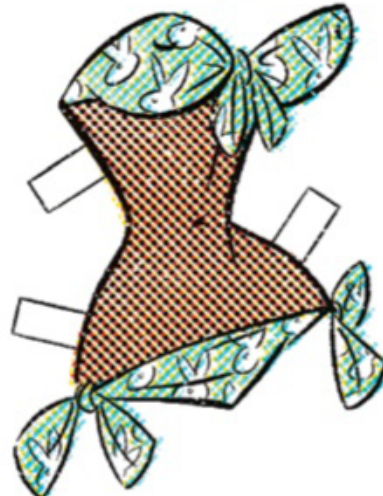
FUN AND
FABULOUS
DRESS



POOL DATE



BATHING BUNNY
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BY SUZANNAH
WEISS

the future of sex toys is gender neutral

BUTT PLUGS ARE NO LONGER ONLY FOR GAY MEN, AND
VIBRATORS AREN'T JUST FOR WOMEN

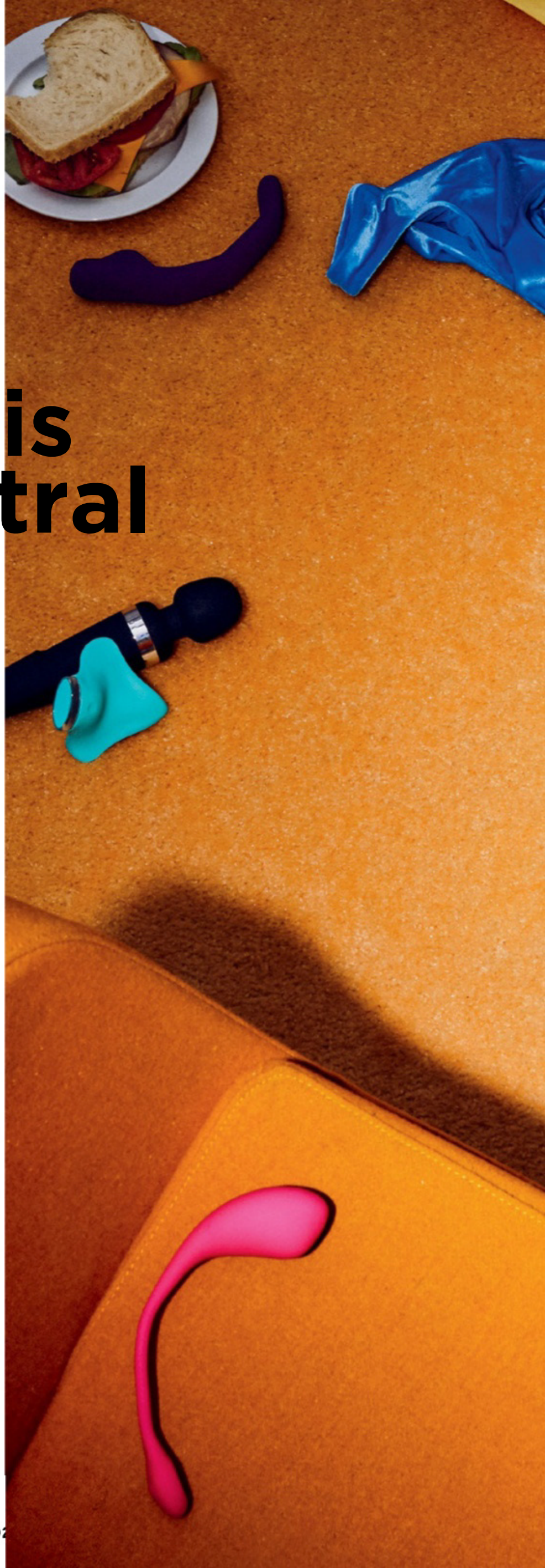
As a kid, I was expected to play with “girls’ toys” like dolls and horses, but I also enjoyed “boys’ toys” like race cars and action figures. As an adult, when sex toys became my playthings of choice, I found there wasn’t much wiggle room: The ones designed for my body were pink or purple, often with photos of women in sexy underwear on the package.

In recent years major retailers have begun to offer gender-neutral products or to market existing ones as gender neutral. Target has removed gender-based signs from its kids’ sections, Amazon no longer uses gender filters in its toy listings, and the Disney Store has stopped labeling children’s costumes as either “boys” or “girls.” But one product category has remained stubbornly gendered: sex toys. Many adult companies are surprisingly regressive in assuming that certain toys are made for certain bodies and certain bodies map onto certain identities. Slowly, though, that’s also changing — and, in the process, changing how we think about sex, gender and pleasure.

Carol Queen, resident sexologist for the feminist sex shop Good Vibrations, says her customers have long been vocal about their desire for less-gendered toys. Some of those customers are among the increasingly visible population of trans and non binary people. A recent study from the Williams Institute at UCLA found that the estimated percentage of adults in the United States who identify as transgender has doubled in roughly the past decade. These people may feel excluded by toys that come in pink pouches emblazoned with photos of women just because they’re designed for vulvas.

“Labeling toys by gender puts the power in the sellers’ hands to make assumptions about buyers based on their gender,” says Ambrose Heffner, a trans man. “Labeling toys by function puts the power in buyers’ hands to make a judgment call and make their own empowered decisions regarding their body and sexuality.”

Restrictive labeling affects cisgender customers as well. “Our





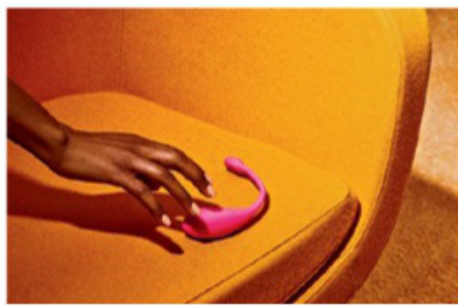
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SCOTTIE CAMERON**



Above: A vibrator for females and a masturbation aid for males, this sex toy is ideal for couples' play but can also be used solo. Rianne S Duo Vibe.

Left: This small but mighty spherical toy packs a powerful punch, and all that's required for enjoyment is nerve endings. Unbound Babes Bean.

Right: Designed for long-distance couples, the Lush 2 allows users to control the vibration intensity via cell phone. Lovense Lush 2.



cis-women customers have long disliked the 'porno lady' boxes because they were being sold an image of what a woman should look like along with their vibrator," Queen explains. Genderneutral toys appeal to people who want to experiment with new sensations but feel intimidated by — or are simply unaware of — products marketed to a different demographic. "There are many men out there who could benefit from using toys marketed to women but haven't because the toys are bright pink or designed to look like a realistic penis," says Daniel Saynt, founder of the sexual-wellness digital agency NSFW Creative.

To meet these customers' demands, brands are tailoring their colors, designs and packaging to a broader range of buyers. Over the past few years, Lovense has released at least two toys, the wand vibrator Domi and the vibrating butt plug Hush, exclusively in black — a stark contrast to its couples' set from 2013: a pink vibrator named Nora and a white masturbation sleeve named Max. Anal-toy seller b-Vibe offers most of its products in black, and sexual-wellness brand Maude offers a plain gray personal massager simply called "vibe." Dame Products, which launched the couples' vibrator Eva to close the pleasure gap between men and women, now markets its products as sex aids for all people with vulvas.

Some companies have even designed new products to work on a variety of bodies. MysteryVibe's Crescendo vibrator folds and twists into different shapes so users can stimulate multiple body parts. Customers appreciate the Crescendo — which, according to MysteryVibe, doubled the company's sales between 2016 and

2018 — because they can use it not just on themselves but also on their partners, regardless of how they identify. "The fact that you can have one multipurpose, fully adaptable product helps shift your focus off the need for the 'correct' toy for a specific region and allows the user to be more creative in the application of it — and thus more creative and engaged in sex in general," says chief marketing officer Dominnique Karetsos.

Lelo's Transformer, which morphs into a rabbit vibrator, cock ring, prostate massager and more, raked in more than \$1 million in its first year, according to the company's brand expert, Stu Nugent. Users like that it isn't in your face about being gender neutral, he explains. "Most nonbinary customers don't want to be reminded of gender all the time."

It's not just sex-toy inventors hopping on the gender neutral bandwagon; some online marketplaces, including Wild Flower, Spectrum Boutique and Vibrant, avoid grouping products by gender or mentioning gender in their descriptions. "Wild Flower has grown by five times its size over the last year alone, and based on customer feedback, a lot of that growth is in part because of how accessible toys become once gender is removed," says Amy Boyajian, Wild Flower co-founder and chief executive officer. "Customers are getting the products they desire easily while also being introduced to new options." (Boyajian also notes that gender-neutral sex toys push back against the "pink tax" — the higher prices typically placed on female-gendered products.)

Many retailers similarly avoid labels such as "sex toys for women" and "sex toys for men" in their signage and conversations with customers, says Lynn Comella, author of *Vibrator Nation: How Feminist Sex-Toy Stores Changed the Business of Pleasure*. "Some of the most interesting conversations I had with sex-toy retailers and buyers were about 'queering' sex toys and breaking open boxes that didn't need to be there," she says.

Although the "gender neutral" label often attracts a wider customer base, many — one could argue all — toys originally made for one gender are already gender neutral. Lelo, for example, says it initially marketed its Mona as a G-spot massager but saw an uptick in sales after promoting it as a prostate massager. "While it's possible to make a versatile sex toy and phrase everything

Below: This weighted anal toy provides the sensation of penetration, while the slick silicone exterior makes for comfortable entry. By Vibe Snug Plug 3.



Above: For the adventurous, this double-ended vibrator can easily morph into a cock ring, a rabbit vibe, a clitoral massager and just about anything else, with a few simple twists. It can be as flexible and versatile as the sexual identity of its users. Lelo Transformer.

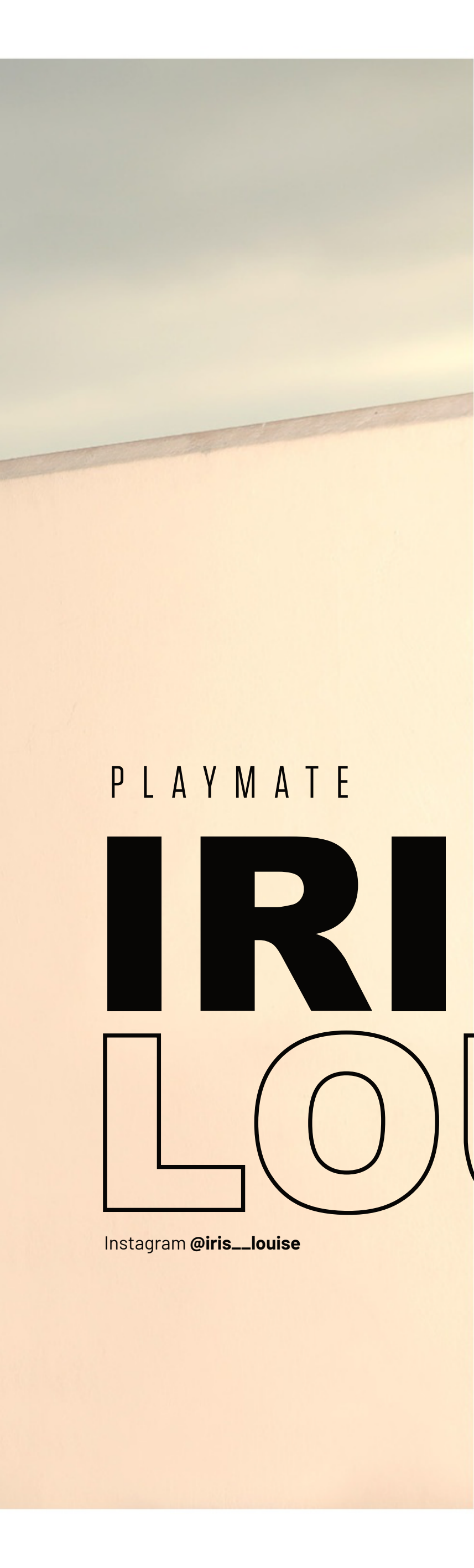
vaguely to avoid making assumptions or dictating how a product should be used, you also occasionally have to say very directly, ‘Hey, try putting this thing directly up your butt,’ ” says Nugent.

While such marketing may seem progressive, sex toys are actually returning to their roots. As far back as the late 1800s, vibrator ads featured both men and women, according to Hallie Lieberman, author of *Buzz: A Stimulating History of the Sex Toy*. “It wasn’t until the 1960s and 1970s, with some in the feminist movement like Betty Dodson turning vibrators into symbols of female empowerment, that they got gendered more female,” she says.

The evolution goes on. The first gender-neutral toys had generic bases with male and female attachments, but as more people identify outside the gender binary, brands are accommodating a broader range of identities. “You can sell a genderneutral toy to a much larger market than you can a gendered toy, so there’s more opportunity to make money,” Lieberman says.

Perhaps one day it will become common knowledge that sex aids of all varieties, just like clothes or children’s toys, can be enjoyed by anyone, regardless of their anatomy or identity. Personally, the chance to use gender-neutral sex toys has helped me feel freer to forge my own identity, just as the ability to play with dinosaurs did when I was a kid. ■





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Congrats on your Playboy Denmark feature! What does this mean to you? This means a lot to me as I am proud to be a part of the Playboy brand.

What do you think of when it comes to Playboy and the iconic bunny? I think of iconic blondes like Marilyn Monroe and Anna Nicole Smith.

Have you ever been to Denmark? If not, would you like to visit someday? I have not been to Denmark, but it would be nice to visit someday.

Tell us about your photo shoot: My photo shoot was in 2019 with Arthur St. John and it was the most memorable of my life.

What has changed in your life since your last Playboy Africa feature? What has changed in my life since my last Playboy feature is I am no longer modeling for a career and I am going back to school to become a vet tech.

Do you prefer the beach or the pool? I prefer the beach.

Read the book or watch the movie? Watch the movie

What attracts you the most in a man? What attracts me most in a man is his smile and charisma.

Biggest turn-on? The biggest turn-on is an animal lover.

Biggest turn-off? Biggest turnoff is smoking

Describe your perfect date. The perfect date would be going to the beach and then a movie.

Favorite sexual position? Missionary.

What's your favorite hobby? My favorite hobby is spending time with my animals.

Who or what is your biggest inspiration? My biggest inspiration is the love I have for animals.

Can you share one secret about yourself? One secret about me is that I am 5'2."

If you can change any one thing in the world right now, what would it be and why? If I could change one thing in the world, it would be fair wages.

PLAYMATE









FACES OF

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN PFLUGER

RESILIENCE

ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STONEWALL RIOTS, WE JOIN THE TREVOR PROJECT
TO CELEBRATE HOW FAR WE'VE COME — AND RAISE AWARENESS OF THE WORK THAT
STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE TO SECURE EQUALITY FOR ALL

BY **NICO LANG**

Fifty years ago, Larry Littlejohn wrote a letter to *PLAYBOY* condemning a method of treatment intended to “cure” homosexuality. Littlejohn, who served as president of San Francisco’s Society for Individual Rights, described the case of a 22-year-old patient “treated for transvestism” through aversion techniques. After showing the patient photos of himself dressed in women’s clothing, Littlejohn claimed, doctors injected the individual with apomorphine. Sometimes used to treat Parkinson’s disease, the drug also induces “headaches, nausea and vomiting.”

“It had been planned to put him through 72 ‘trials,’ ” Littlejohn wrote, “but the last four had to be abandoned because he became irritable, confused and hostile; developed rigors, high temperature and high blood pressure; suffered from impaired coordination and was unable to maintain a normal conversation.”

Although doctors had declared the patient “cured” of his condition, Littlejohn noted that another person subjected to electroshock therapy, this time as treatment to cure homosexuality, “wept for half an hour after each session.” He eventually refused further sessions after “rushing out of the room in tears.”

“I cannot see where this form of treatment differs from the tortures of the Inquisition or the brainwashing of the Communists,” Littlejohn concluded.

His letter to the editor was published in March 1969 — four months before the Stonewall riots, during which activists including Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera fought back against police brutality at gay bars in New York City’s West Village. But 50 years after the six-day protest kick-started what would become the modern LGBTQ movement, the treatment Littlejohn described remains legal in 34 states in this country. New York passed statewide legislation to ban the practice only in January.

Today such treatments are widely known as conversion therapy, though they’re sometimes referred to as “reparative therapy” or “orientation change.” The terms refer to a loosely associated range of practices including everything from shock treatment and aversion

therapy to waterboarding and ice baths. In the vast majority of cases, though, conversion therapy takes the form of talk therapy wherein LGBTQ individuals meet with a counselor or pastor who teaches them that who they are is “sick” and “wrong.”

At the time of Littlejohn’s letter, homosexuality was considered a “mental illness”; since then, the American Medical Association and other organizations have evolved. In its *Journal of Ethics*, the AMA has condemned conversion therapy as harmful and ineffective, claiming it leads to depression, anxiety and increased risk of suicidal ideation. Despite such cautionary assessments, an estimated 700,000 people in the United States have been subjected to the practice. Without decisive action, in the coming years thousands more LGBTQ youth will join the ranks of (often traumatized) conversion-therapy survivors.

To honor the decades of advocacy against conversion therapy, *PLAYBOY* partnered with the Trevor Project — a national LGBTQ youth suicide-prevention organization and architect of the “50 Bills 50 States” campaign to ban conversion therapy nationwide. On the following pages we spotlight and celebrate six activists and survivors who are raising awareness of its impact.

Their stories, each representative of a different experience with conversion therapy and presented alongside stunning portraits by queer photographer Ryan Pfluger, are a reminder of what Franklin E. Kameny, co-founder and president of the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., wrote in *PLAYBOY* five decades ago. (His letter to the editor ran alongside Littlejohn’s in response to April 1967 and August 1968 *Playboy Forum* comments made by behavioral researchers Gerald Davison and David Barlow, who believed it was possible to recondition “sexual deviation.”) Kameny, whose organization was a branch of one of the first LGBTQ advocacy groups in the U.S., declared that homosexuality didn’t need to be cured.

“Gay is good,” he said.

These inspiring leaders are working to ensure society finally heeds that message.



the advocate

sam brinton
alexandria, virginia

Sam Brinton would be the first to admit they are an unlikely face of today's movement to ban conversion therapy. Brinton, who identifies as gender fluid and uses gender-neutral pronouns, received a master's degree in nuclear engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2013 and started a nonprofit devoted to clean-energy advocacy soon after. "My technical passion is solving nuclear waste and disarming nuclear bombs," they say. "I've been doing it for more than a decade."

But two years before graduation, Brinton took on a very different kind of advocacy. As a conversion-therapy survivor, they began lobbying states to ban the practice, which was still legal in all 50 states in 2011. California became the first state to outlaw orientation-change efforts affecting LGBTQ youth the following year.

While advocates and survivors have been fighting against conversion therapy for decades — through litigation and storytelling, and by persuading major medical and mental health organizations to cease treating a person's sexual orientation or gender identity as a pathology — recent years have seen the practice achieve unprecedented levels of public attention and legislative progress. Today's advocacy landscape, Brinton notes, is practically unrecognizable in comparison with that of just eight years ago.

In 2019, the top Google search results for "conversion therapy" are resource guides and info sheets from LGBTQ organizations including the Trevor Project and Born Perfect, an initiative founded by the National Center for Lesbian Rights. But in 2011, Brinton

says, the top 10 or 20 entries on Google were for conversion-therapy providers seeking patients. At the time, the LGBTQ movement was largely focused on marriage equality, so it was "hard to find anyone who would listen."

"Most people didn't think conversion therapy was still happening, and most people didn't think it was worthy of attention," Brinton explains, adding that advocacy efforts in 2011 focused on "trying to find someone who cared." But by 2017, the movement to ban conversion therapy had gained enough momentum that Brinton left nuclear engineering to work as the head of advocacy and government affairs for the Trevor Project. Advances since then have been significant. When Brinton brought the 50 Bills 50 States project to the LGBTQ youth organization two years ago, just five states — California, New Jersey, Oregon, Illinois and Vermont — had taken action to outlaw orientation-change efforts. Four states moved to ban conversion therapy in 2017, and five followed suit in 2018.

At press time, two states — New York and Massachusetts — had taken action this year to protect LGBTQ youth from "gay cure" treatments, and two more may soon join them. Colorado, led by Jared Polis, the country's first openly gay governor, is expected to enact a ban this year, and Maine governor Janet Mills has pledged her support for a conversion-therapy ban should legislation reach her desk.

Brinton credits that progress to the tireless advocacy of conversion-therapy survivors. But according to Brinton, misconceptions about the treatment persist.

"So many people think that because this is being done by a licensed therapist, it's effective and it works," they say. "Every major medical association and organization has come out against conversion therapy, and yet there's this pervasive idea that because the person who is doing it has the word doctor before their name, this must be good."

Brinton, who was subjected to shock therapy at the age of 11, won't be satisfied until conversion therapy is treated the same as smoking. "The Surgeon General has a warning on every pack of cigarettes," they say. "I want every single person across the country to know how bad conversion therapy is for their health."

In the meantime, Brinton keeps, above their desk, a memento of how far the movement has come. In 2015, when President Barack Obama came out against conversion therapy, it was reported above the fold of *The New York Times* — marking the first time a sitting president condemned the practice. Since then, Brinton has begun collecting pens from all the governors — seven Republicans and nine Democrats—who have signed conversion-therapy bans.

Brinton is hoping to add 34 more someday. If the past eight years are any indication, it may be sooner than anyone could have imagined.

Dusty Ray Bottoms prayed for a change. He just didn't know what needed to change. He was 20 years old and home on spring break from Wright State, a small university outside Dayton, Ohio built on land donated by the nearby Air Force base. Bottoms didn't fit in with his classmates in the theater program, and his home life wasn't any easier. The son and grandson of evangelical pastors, he grew up in what he calls a "conservative, God-fearing household."

Bottoms was essentially living three lives: There was the person his parents wanted him to be, the person his peers wanted him to be, and the hollow space where he hoped to one day carve out his own identity. He cried out to God to come and fill the space. "I can't do this anymore," he said. "I need something to happen."

The very next morning Bottoms got his wish. His mother called him down to the kitchen, saying his father had discovered something on his computer. To this day, he still doesn't know what it was his father found, but as he crossed the threshold into the living room, he already knew what they were about to say. Bottoms came out to them, the private longings and fears left unspoken for years suddenly pouring out like shattered glass.

"I was so terrified they were going to disown me and kick me out, but they did quite the opposite," he recalls. "They wanted to do anything they could to fix me. I was so depressed at the time that I would try anything to feel happy or to feel better."

At his parents' request, Bottoms agreed to be exorcised. At the age of 12, he had been sexually assaulted by a man who had pulled him underneath the stall in a mall bathroom. Although he'd lied and said he got away before the man hurt him, his parents remained convinced that he was "possessed by a gay demon." The church he grew up in taught that "if you have a sexual encounter with someone, you take on that person's spirit," he explains.

Bottoms compares his exorcism to a trip to the principal's office. The two-hour session was held in a conference room at a local church, where he was given a series of rules to follow. The facilitator, whom Bottoms calls a "prayer warrior," ordered him to keep both feet planted firmly on the floor and put his hands on the table in the center of the room, palms facing up. Bottoms was instructed to maintain eye contact with the prayer warrior at all times and keep his mouth wide open so the demons could be released. Three people held him in place while his parents looked on — his father scarlet-faced, his mother crying.

"I had to list the names of all the people I ever had a sexual encounter with," he says. "I was nervous, so I made up names. They tried to get me to speak in tongues. I just remember the prayer warrior would tell me to say 'Hallelujah!' over and over and over and over

unique," he says. His stage name is a combination of his childhood nickname, Dusty Ray, and a playful taunt from fellow waiters at a serving job in the city. After performing for nearly a decade in New York bars and nightclubs, last year Bottoms competed on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, on which he opened up publicly for the first time about surviving conversion therapy.

Bottoms came out as a survivor because he hoped it would help others who had endured similar circumstances feel less alone. But now he just wants to prove he was never broken, never needed fixing in the first place. After the exorcism, he was forced to meet with church leaders for a series of exit interviews, and during the third and final session a pastor warned him against continuing down the path of a "homosexual lifestyle."

"You will never find true love," he recalls the man saying. "You will never find success. You will just have a life of misery."

Today Bottoms knows that isn't true. The popularity of *RuPaul's Drag Race* has given him a global fan base. He has starred in national ad campaigns. His one-woman show, *It's a Hard Dot Life*, is set to tour the United States. He's engaged to his partner of six years. "Everything they said I couldn't have," he says, "I have."

the celebrity

dusty ray bottoms

new york, new york

again, really fast, and the tongues would come."

This isn't the first time Bottoms has told this story. He moved to New York City to pursue acting in 2010 and began doing drag after seeing performances by local artists Bob the Drag Queen and Thorgy Thor. Their shows gave him permission to be "different, weird and





the survivor

peter nunn

norcross, georgia

When Peter Nunn was 15 years old, his parents told him he was going on a trip. What he didn't know was that they'd found a men's workout magazine he'd tucked away. At the time, Nunn didn't understand what he was feeling or what it meant to be gay. Homeschooled throughout his childhood, he was raised in a repressive fundamentalist faith that he compares to a cult. "Every aspect of your life was controlled," he says. Transgressing those strict dictates meant risking excommunication, both from the church and the entire community.

During a layover at the airport, his father explained that Nunn was headed to a "therapy center" where counselors were going to "fix" him. If Nunn didn't change, he says, his family planned to "get rid" of him.

"I wasn't prepared for this. I'd been a pretty happy kid, but really quickly — just in that one conversation — I realized everything was on the line for me: my family, my relationship with my parents, my security of having a home, but also my faith and my God were at risk. If I didn't get this fixed, then everything that was important to me in my life could be taken away."

Nunn spent two weeks receiving conversion-therapy treatment at a center in Sioux City, Iowa. He says the building looked like a small office complex that might have been built in the 1970s — a series of sparsely furnished rooms with chairs and desks filling the space as an afterthought. During sessions, counselors told him, he recalls, that "homosexuality is a sin, that God punishes gay people with AIDS, and that there's no way to be in a happy gay relationship." If he continued

acting on his attraction to men, they warned, he would die alone.

Although Nunn wanted to change, these sessions weren't the cure his parents had prayed for. Instead, he was left with depression and shame. At the age of 16, he attempted to take his own life.

Nunn survived that attempt, and he has continued surviving. In his early 20s, at the urging of a friend, he began seeing a psychologist, who helped him cope with the trauma he'd experienced. Even as he began dating men and slowly opening up to friends about his sexuality, the lessons he learned in conversion therapy festered.

"I didn't feel loved by my family, my friends or my God," he says.

Therapy helped him embrace the parts of himself he'd been taught to hate, but it also showed him that talking about his trauma could be transformative — both for himself and his community. In March, he testified in favor of House Bill 580, which seeks to ban conversion therapy in the state of Georgia. If the bill becomes law, therapists in the Peach State will be subject to "discipline by the appropriate licensing authority" if they're caught offering any treatment that seeks to "cure" the sexual orientation or gender identity of anyone under the age of 18.

By talking about his experiences, Nunn hopes to help ensure other LGBTQ youth don't have to suffer the hardships he did.

"If I can give hope to a kid or educate a parent who might not understand how dangerous this practice is and might reconsider sending their kid to conversion therapy," he says, "then it will have been worth it."

In many ways, Ralph Bruneau has been there from the beginning. When former California state senator Ted Lieu — now a U.S. representative — sought to introduce legislation banning conversion therapy in 2012, Equality California called Bruneau, a marriage and family therapist based in Los Angeles, to help craft the language. At the time, Bruneau was on the board of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, where he played a part in creating a certification process for LGBTQaffirmative therapists.

As a gay man himself, Bruneau says, he leaped at the chance to help set a precedent for other states to pass legislation banning conversion therapy for LGBTQ youth.

“I don’t think there’s anybody in our LGBTQ world who doesn’t carry around injury and shame, whether they’ve been through conversion therapy or not,” says Bruneau, who specializes in trauma relief for both gay and straight patients. “It’s so pernicious and so pervasive that it haunts us through our lives. Conversion therapy is ground zero for that.”

Bruneau knows the weight of shame and how difficult it is to unload. He moved to New York City to pursue acting during the time of “free love” in the 1970s, when it felt as though “sex happened almost everywhere.” He struggled to reconcile the radical sexual liberation he experienced in the West Village with the nagging idea that maybe, just maybe, he could be straight if he tried hard enough. He attended group sessions at a Scientology center in Manhattan and attempted a practice known as aesthetic realism, which sought to balance an individual’s feminine and masculine energies.

Bruneau didn’t change, but the world around him did. When the HIV/AIDS epidemic swept through New York in the 1980s, he watched as his theater community was hit hard. Two men with whom he had long-term relationships both died. After he began volunteering at a hospice in the city, he quit acting to pursue his master’s (and later his Ph.D.) in clinical psychology.

“Every resource we had was being used to care for our loved ones, and I wanted to redirect my life in that direction,” he says. “I’ve been doing that ever since.”

His work as a clinician led him, eight years ago, to advocate against conversion therapy, and eventually Bruneau found an unexpected platform to raise awareness about the practice’s harms. In 2017 he competed in International Mr. Leather, an annual contest held in Chicago that’s best described as Miss America meets Tom of Finland. Bruneau’s speech was about his “journey out of shame.”

“I had tried everything, and the thing that worked was to accept that I’m born perfect,” he now says.

Bruneau won the title, which made him the oldest IML winner in history. A friend often jokes that his victory was historic for another reason: “Nobody else ever won IML with a ‘save the children’ speech,” Bruneau says.

Bruneau spent the greater part of the following year traveling the world to represent IML. During his travels he raised funds for a National Center for Lesbian Rights campaign to ban conversion therapy. His goal was to raise “enough money to hire one staff member for one year.” He says he came close. According to

Bruneau, most people he discussed the issue with weren’t even aware that orientation-change efforts were still legal in their country. At the national level, as few as three countries have outlawed conversion therapy.

Bruneau believes it’s his duty to use his platform, his profession and his expertise to fight for LGBTQ youth. He hopes others will join him.

“Those of us who’ve dealt with shame our whole lives,” he says, “have an obligation to do what we can to make sure other generations of kids don’t feel the shame we felt.”

the therapist

ralph bruneau
los angeles, california





the faithful

gaby garcia-vera

washington, d.c.

“Did you hear?” Gaby Garcia-Vera asked his friends and family. “Isn’t this so amazing?”

It was March 27, 2019, and Puerto Rico governor Ricardo Rosselló had just signed an executive order protecting minors from the practice of conversion therapy. Although the order doesn’t outright ban the practice in the U.S. commonwealth, it does call on Puerto Rico’s health officials to take action, within 90 days, against therapy that promotes efforts to change sexual orientation.

From Washington, D.C., Garcia-Vera dialed everyone he knew who still lived on the island — his birthplace and home until the age of 18. A year and a half after Hurricane Maria left Puerto Rico with a death toll in the thousands, and thousands more without clean water or electricity, Garcia-Vera felt irrepressible joy that his community had something to celebrate.

“In the midst of all the horrible things that have happened, it made me proud to be Puerto Rican,” he tells *PLAYBOY*. “It was affirming. It made me feel seen.”

Garcia-Vera is among the 70 percent of Puerto Ricans who identify as Catholic. At the age of 11, he shared his sexual orientation for the first time — “I was part of one of the first generations of folks who came out really, really young,” he says. Some people in his personal life told him that those like him were “inherently bad.” There was something inside them that “needed to get fixed to be right with God.”

Garcia-Vera isn’t a survivor of conversion therapy, but after joining the Trevor Project’s youth advisory council in 2011, he began meeting

LGBTQ youth who had been forced to attend camps that promised to pray the gay away. He understood the trauma they experienced.

“I know the warm wash of being and feeling alone,” he says. “I know what it feels like for someone to single you out because of who you love. It is one of the most difficult things to overcome.”

Many practitioners of conversion therapy invoke scripture to legitimize their work. But Garcia-Vera’s Catholicism is precisely what feeds his passion to end the practice nationwide. Feeling shunned by a religious tradition that, he was told, viewed him as the living embodiment of sin, he left the Catholic Church as a teenager. It wasn’t until his mid-20s, as he questioned whether condemnation could truly represent God’s feelings toward LGBTQ people, that Garcia-Vera began to reconcile his faith with his sexual orientation.

“If we’re all made in God’s image, then you’re perfect the way you are — with all your imperfections,” he says. “Loving someone else inherently can’t be something that is imperfect.”

Today, Garcia-Vera works for a nonpartisan Catholic advocacy group in the nation’s capital. In his efforts to ban conversion therapy, he continues to see how morality can be “weaponized” against the LGBTQ community. While talking to a conservative politician in Florida who supported a bill that would allow adoption agencies to discriminate against same-sex couples, for example, Garcia-Vera says the lawmaker asserted that homosexuality is a personal choice.

Catholicism is showing some signs of evolution. In a 2014 Pew Research Center survey, seven out of 10 Catholics in the U.S. agreed that society should accept homosexuality, compared with 66 percent of mainline Protestants and 36 percent of evangelical Protestants. Though Pope Francis has been lauded for his more moderate views on homosexuality, he seemingly endorsed conversion therapy as recently as August 2018, saying that “a lot can be done through psychiatry.” The Vatican backtracked on those remarks, but the pontiff outlined a similar sentiment in April, when he advised parents of LGBTQ youth to “please consult and go to a professional” if they are “seeing rare things” in their children.

As Catholic leaders and conservative lawmakers refuse to modernize their views, Garcia-Vera remains optimistic that one day our leaders, both elected and religious, will realize the responsibility they have to those “they represent—to both do better and be better.”

“Who and how we love isn’t something that is up for question,” he says. “We know exactly who we are. We deserve better.”

Veronica Kennedy remembers exactly where she was when she found out Matthew Shepard had been murdered. Then just 18, Kennedy was living with her parents while she attended Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale. She had come home between classes to eat lunch and furiously type up a paper she'd waited until the last minute to start writing. Her family had a television in the basement, and when she looked up, she saw Shepard's face. He was killed in October 1998 by two men, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, who beat him and left him tied to a fence to die.

Kennedy didn't know him as Matthew Shepard. She knew him as Matt, a theater nerd with a "goose-honk laugh" who frequently showed up to class with a rumpled shirt when he missed laundry day on Mondays. The two had attended the American School in Switzerland, where their classmates included the "children of civil servants and military brats, along with Saudi princes, celebrities' kids and rich businessmen's children." They were dorm mates and had German class together.

Kennedy, who was just entering her freshman year when Shepard was a senior, is still reluctant to discuss his death. She describes the horror of seeing him become a national symbol of anti-gay hate crimes as the "end of innocence."

"I didn't talk about it for a long time, but what I did do was become very vocal as an advocate," she says. "I came out."

Kennedy describes herself as "bisexual, a polyglot and a giant nerd." But she is "a mother first and foremost," which she says gave her a new perspective on the violence and stigma LGBTQ people face just because of who they are. Around the time she gave birth to her son, Elias, and after meeting Sam Brinton and learning about the 50 Bills 50 States campaign, Kennedy began to research conversion therapy. As the mother of a little boy who is "black, Irish and Colombian," the prospect of anyone trying to force him to be someone he isn't horrifies her.

"It's as ludicrous as me saying I'm going to change my kid from straight to gay," Kennedy says. "If Elias comes to me one day and says, 'Mom, I'm straight,' what am I going to do — send him off to try and make him gay? How goofy does that sound?"

Her experience as both a mother and a teenage friend of Matthew Shepard has given her a unique voice with which to advocate against orientation change. The only cisgender female

member of the Washington, D.C. chapter of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, she frequents gay bars in the metro area in gothic nun regalia to advocate for HIV/AIDS awareness. But Kennedy says her role in the drag activist troupe has evolved: She often broaches the subject of conversion therapy with the people she meets, many of whom are survivors.

One interaction sticks out to her. When she was five months pregnant, Kennedy rode with her fellow sisters in the 2015 Pride parade, the punishing humidity of summer in D.C. compounded by the group's signature costumery. As they prepared to board the float, a drag queen approached her and noticed she was expecting. "Love that baby regardless of how he turns out," he told her. "I am who I am right now because I had to stand up for myself and my parents wouldn't."

The two never spoke again after that day, and Kennedy will probably never know exactly what that stranger went through. But having witnessed the brutal cost of homophobia, she told the drag queen exactly what she would one day tell her son. "You are fantastic and you are beautiful," she said. "You are perfection, sweetheart."

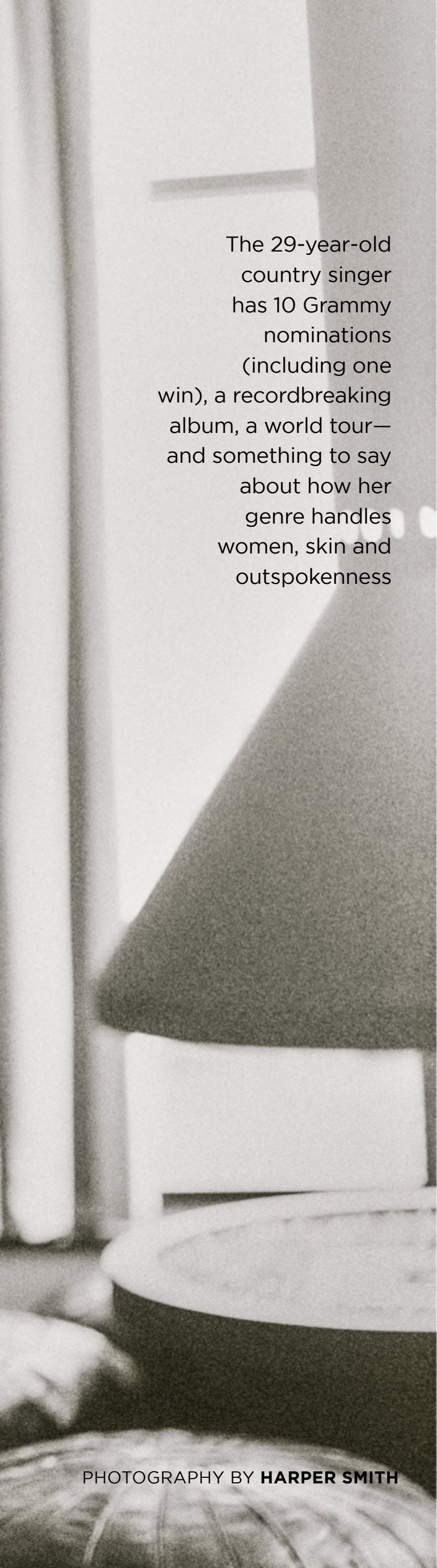
the parent
veronica kennedy
annandale, virginia



20 / Q

MAREN MORRIS





The 29-year-old
country singer
has 10 Grammy
nominations
(including one
win), a recordbreaking
album, a world tour—
and something to say
about how her
genre handles
women, skin and
outspokenness

BY **ANDREA DOMANICK**

Q1: *Your 2016 debut, **Hero**, won you a Grammy, and this year's follow-up, **Girl**, was streamed 24 million times in its first week—the most for any studio country album by a woman. What does the spirit of this transition, from **Hero** to **Girl**, mean to you?*

MORRIS: I wrote the bulk of **Hero** around four years ago at a time when virtually no women were being played on country radio. And from the few who were, I felt I wasn't hearing my perspective. I wanted to hear less from a girl singing to a guy about how cute he is and how she wants him to notice her, and more from the perspective of 20-somethings who are out of college but aren't quite ready to settle down. Those fun few years when you're just a mess, you've got a few flings but are starting to come into your womanhood and adulthood. You're not making as many of the same mistakes as you did in your early 20s, but you're still not ready to call it a day. I wanted to be the sassy voice of reason. I was also going through a tough breakup after five years in my first real relationship. At the same time, my career was starting to take off. So **Hero** was part breakup record, part me finding my independence.

Over the next few years, I started to become more of a boss and a sort of CEO for myself, putting my band and crew on salary, giving them health insurance, becoming the head of this machine.

I also fell in love. I started to open up more to my fans. I wanted people to know I'm still that girl, but I'm growing up and I'm okay with being vulnerable. It's not a weakness. When you find an equal in your life, it's not you giving up anything or any part of you; it's sharing your whole self with another whole self. It took me a second to realize that's a good thing.

Q2: ***Girl** meditates on everything from craving sex and being in love to moments of yearning and the more emotional nuances of being a woman. How do you approach writing about these topics in a time when feminism and womanhood tend to be associated with a take-no-prisoners kind of strength?*

MORRIS: By being honest with myself and knowing I don't have the sassy, armored exterior many of my fans probably think I have. I've learned it's okay to not be a badass all the time. Over the past few years, as I wrote **Girl**, I learned that it's not a weakness to be vulnerable with somebody else, to share all your light and your darkness with them, to trust that they won't trample your heart or judge you. That was such a learning curve for me, because I used to think if

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **HARPER SMITH**



Locking into becoming an established country artist has been daunting.

you were vulnerable and admitted how much you needed someone, you were being submissive. That's so far from the case. Saying I need my husband [country singer-songwriter Ryan Hurd] isn't me submitting to his power. It's me being independent and saying, "Yeah, I need your fucking time right now."

It's healthy to tell someone that. It's not co-dependent; it's a gift. It takes strength. It takes balls. My acceptance of that felt like, Wow, this is some woman shit. There's strength in the femininity of needing someone but also in having the confidence to ask for it.

Q3: *The album's title track has become an anthem among your fans. Can you explain its meaning?*

MORRIS: It's about a fight I was having with another woman who's also in the music industry. Women in this industry are often pitted against each other. It's not our fault, but we internalize it, because that's what women do. We take on the weight, because we're always so quick to apologize and make peace when we should be like, "Actually, this is their issue, not ours. We need to figure this out. It's not our fault there are so few slots that we turn on each other."

Q4: *Yet you've also said, "Being a woman isn't the most interesting thing about me."*

MORRIS: "What's it like to be a woman in the music industry today?" is the question I'm most sick of being asked. My husband is an artist as well, and no one ever asks him what it's like to be a man in the industry today. What would he say? "Same as it ever was." I never know how to re-answer that question. I don't know how to answer it in the first place, actually, because I don't want to be remembered for being a great female artist. I would like to be known as a great artist.

Q5: *Last year you were featured on Zedd's "The Middle," one of the biggest songs of 2018, which landed three Grammy nominations. What do you wish people knew about you now that you have a higher profile?*

MORRIS: I would love for people to do their research and know that I'm not just an artist. I started as a writer and wrote for other artists, and I co-produced my last two albums. I don't get a ton of questions about my work in that realm. It's always, "So you changed your hair and, like, how crazy is that?" It's like, Motherfucker, I produced my album, thanks.

Q6: *Okay, we'll take the bait. How has your background as a songwriter shaped you as an artist?*

MORRIS: I learned so much in my years

behind the scenes. I had to help produce my own demo sessions, and I definitely learned how to listen to and follow trends on the radio as a writer, for research. That has helped me pick singles; I know what hits my ear. Sometimes I'm right, sometimes I'm wrong — but most of the time I've been right. It comes from studying in the “university” of Nashville songwriting and learning from people who were better than me.

Not thinking you can produce is a mentality even incredible writers are forced into. It's not an easy line of work, but when you love every facet of making music, you really do care how a guitar sounds. You care about the reverb on your vocal or how loud the bass is — details like that. I love sinking my teeth into it. That's why it takes me so long to make music, because I overthink it sometimes.

Q7: *Are you a perfectionist?*

MORRIS: I'm a perfectionist until I'm not. I know when I get a gut feeling about something and it's done. Some people will just keep working on music, remixing it and changing things little by little until it's two years later. And then you never put it out. Luckily I have a bone in my body that tells me, “Okay, you can't do anything else to this.”

Q8: *Various headlines have described you as being restricted by country. Are media outlets getting the narrative right?*

MORRIS: In a sense, no, because I actually am played on the radio. For the past two years I've been the most-played woman on country radio. It's still way less than a man, but for some reason my music is being played. It's not just about having a catchy song; it's because I don't sound like anyone else. At the beginning, that was hard, but all my singles have been risks. Even doing “The Middle” was a risk, because I was risking that country radio would think I was abandoning them because I was part of this giant pop song.

That I'm restrained in any way is a dumb perception, because I've tried to kick ass at everything I do. I work hard. I wish the same for my sisters, because they work just as hard, if not harder, than I do, and they don't get a single spin on the radio. I don't think I'm pissing on my success by speaking up for them. I'm just trying to say, while I have the success and while I'm here, why aren't any of my friends getting played? I want to shine a light while I have it and not let it be just about me.

Q9: *The past few years have seen greater crossover between country and pop. Is this helping country music? What do you think when people suggest that country music needs saving?*

MORRIS: There will always be traditionalists in every genre who try to hold on to the old. I have respect for that, because there's so much about country music — classic country music—that I love. But every generation has been accused of ruining country music, even the outlaw era of Waylon and Willie. Country is evolving. It's always evolving. You'll always have purists no matter what.

Q10: *So cross-pollination between genres is a good thing?*

MORRIS: Country artists having songs on the pop charts and on pop radio this past year has only helped our genre. Most young people who stream music don't listen to it because of its genre; they listen to it because

it's popular, or they discovered it on a playlist and it makes them feel something. When I did “The Middle” with Zedd, most of the world had never heard of me. A lot of people have checked out my country music as a result. It has brought a lot of awareness, fans and listeners to country music, especially recently. It's good for our genre to cross-pollinate, because it makes for better music. It's keeping everyone on their toes and not regurgitating the same kind of art on the conveyor belt.

Q11: *You performed at this year's Grammys with Miley Cyrus and Dolly Parton, and you recently invited pop star JoJo to perform with you onstage in Los Angeles during your world tour. What other artists do you want to sing with?*

MORRIS: I would love to sing with Kehlani. I saw H.E.R. at the Grammys, and she was incredible. I love Khalid. If I'm shooting real high, I would love to sing with Beyoncé. That's the pinnacle.

Q12: *Bigger success has opened you up to more criticism. You've been slut-shamed and body-shamed online quite a bit. Why are you still dealing with this in country-music culture?*

MORRIS: It's a transitional time. Everyone's super anxious. A lot of it is the political climate, the culture of social media. Anytime someone is courageous or doesn't try to blend in, it pisses people off. It's been like this forever, but we're much more connected now than we used to be. A lot of hot-button things that seem small explode into something huge.



Q13: *Have you ever regretted something you've said publicly?*

MORRIS: Not really. Every time I've spoken up or clapped back at some troll, it has been very much me. I wouldn't go back on any of it, because they deserved it. Body shamers? They're asking for it. I would never regret calling them out.

At one point I posted a picture of Emma González, one of the survivors of the Parkland shooting, and I lost probably 5,000 followers. To not be able to share an opinion, or to lose fans and ticket sales over it, is so mind-boggling to me, because it's an American right — a human right — to be able to voice your opinion. Of course, any fan has the choice to quit buying your music or listening to it. But as a tax-paying citizen, I should be allowed to speak up when I'm passionate about something. It's always to increase awareness. It's to let my fans know where I stand. I don't want to be one of those head-in-the-sand artists who's only worried about keeping the money in my pocket. I get only one life here, and if I'm going to be a musician and do this thing I've been given a gift for, I would like people to know what I believe in. This is where I stand, this is what I want, this is the world I want my kids to live in. That's why I speak up when I do. It definitely ruffles feathers. Not many country artists speak up.

Q14: *Not many country artists have agreed to be photographed by PLAYBOY either.*

MORRIS: I remember Dolly Parton's amazing [October 1978] PLAYBOY cover and reading about the drama surrounding this wholesome figure being part of a magazine that has showcased naked women for decades. It was such a faux pas in country music, and yet she ended up making one of the most iconic PLAYBOY covers of all time. Not many other country artists have done that.

I was intrigued, because so many of the moves Dolly made in her career were about bucking the status quo, especially when it came to sexuality and gender norms within country music. As a woman in country music — as a woman in any genre — it always fascinated me. So when I heard this magazine wanted to interview and photograph me, I thought, Okay, I've seen a lot of wonderful spreads you guys have done with artists I love, such as Halsey, so what the hell?

Q15: *Are you concerned about how people might react to your being in this magazine?*

MORRIS: I'm speaking such a loud, noisy concept of what it means to be a woman in the music industry right now. This feels like I'm amplifying a message I've been passionate about since the beginning that has intensified in the past year. I feel I've already challenged a lot of sexual norms. It's funny, because it's not that risqué in the grand scheme of things. Even the cover of *Girl* is slightly risqué, but it feels like me — throwback but a little modern. I knew it would piss some people off that I was in a bra top. Doing PLAYBOY has been a really fun challenge. I'm trying to do more things that scare me. Every year I'm trying to peel back my layers emotionally — and I guess physically.

Q16: *What else scares you?*

MORRIS: Locking into becoming an established country artist with each passing year has been daunting. It's where I'm comfortable; it's what I grew up in. But I'm sick of the standards we've been forced into, and it scares me that I'm getting so fed up with certain norms.

Q17: *How so?*

MORRIS: I could just shut up and sing, keep my head down, not talk about politics or sexuality in my songs. But I swear quite a bit. I talk openly about drinking. I'm learning things about myself that are starting to freak me out, in a good way. I'm growing





up, and that doesn't necessarily mean becoming more mature or wiser or buttoning things up a bit more. Sometimes it's letting it all be a little more freewheeling.

Q18: *You've been married for just over a year. What has marriage taught you?*

MORRIS: It's taught me that I'm not always right. I've been doing this music thing for so long that it's how I'm conditioned. Letting someone else in and letting him be a part of that with me has been a bigger struggle than I imagined. It's so easy to fall in love, but to stay in love and to fall deeper into love? That's work. It's not giving up your stance but allowing yourself to listen. You both could be right; just because you disagree with somebody doesn't mean they're wrong.

Being married for the past year has also helped me figure out more who I am independently. For example, my husband is very much a feminist, and I've never really done anything that's freaked him out. He has always been accepting. Even with *PLAYBOY*, he was like, "That's really hot." It's awesome to be with somebody who is an equal and isn't trying to make you feel like a skank because you're proud of your body — someone who's not watering down

your ideologies for patriarchal and bullshit standards that women in country music have been locked into for the past several decades.

Q19: *What makes you feel sexy?*

MORRIS: I've been trying to be better at exercising the past year or two. I don't want to be skinny. I want to be strong and feel like Lara Croft. I remember when choosing *Girl*'s cover, I was like, Yeah, I have this body; I'm going to put it on the cover! I felt really sexy because I knew I was going to get flak for it, from these little titties, but I'm definitely owning it. I like when I scare the absolute shit out of myself like that. That's when I feel sexy. That's what gets me off.

Q20: *What should our readers know about sex or sexuality that maybe they haven't thought about?*

MORRIS: Lingerie is supremely overrated and unnecessary. Also, I would say that if you're in a relationship and that person isn't going down on you on the regular, dump them. If it doesn't happen enough early on, you know what you're getting for the rest of it. A selfish lover is a no-go from the get-go. Just dump him, dump her, dump whoever it is. If you can't sometimes give and sometimes take or have a completely equal experience, then that person is probably selfish in many other facets of his or her life as well. ■



IN SEARCH OF THE #20BITEEN MAN

ART BY OSCAR RODRÍGUEZ AMADO



SEXUAL EXPRESSION
HAS ARGUABLY NEVER
BEEN MORE INCLUSIVE,
BUT BISEXUAL MEN STILL
STRUGGLE SIMPLY TO
CONVINCE THE WORLD
THEY EXIST. WE ASKED
FIVE OF THEM TO TELL US
THEIR STORIES

BY **DANA
HAMILTON**

“I don’t think I could date a bi guy,” a friend recently told me. “I’d be constantly paranoid that he’d want to leave.”

I had giddily sent her a picture and some quick facts about the man I was going out with that night — bi, a dad, a scientist — which I usually do before a date, both out of excitement and for my safety. But when I got my friend’s response, my stomach dropped, even though it was hardly the first time I’d heard something like it.

As a sex columnist, I strive to clear up myths, whether they’re rooted in fact (blue balls) or not (“accidental” anal). I’ve written about baby play, sex dolls and furies, and no one has batted an eye in terms of accepting their validity. Yet male bisexuality remains a blind spot even in my relatively progressive inner circle. I’ve been asked if I worry about being cheated on or contracting an STI and why I bother dating bi men if they “all end up with other guys anyway.” I thought the rise of the hashtag #20BiTeen would help, but scrolling through the posts, I see next to no men. The only place I find any is in my dating-app DMs. So where are they?

The 2016 National Survey of Family Growth shows that 1.8 percent of adult men and 5.6

percent of adult women ages 18 to 44 identify as bisexual. (Bisexuality was first widely recognized as an orientation by the scientific community in the 1950s.) Those numbers have been rising incrementally, and search-engine statistics suggest they’ll continue to do so: Since 2016, searches for “bisexual test” have risen by 90 percent, “Am I bi? quiz” by 182 percent and “signs of bisexuality in males” by a whopping 2,147 percent, according to a global study conducted by SEMrush. But the NSFG research also indicates that far more people have had same-sex sexual encounters than ultimately identify as bi. This discrepancy has come up in the data for the past 30 years — despite the fact that in large, population-based studies, bisexual behavior is more common than purely lesbian or gay behavior.

Kerith Conron, research director at the UCLA School of Law’s Williams Institute, who specializes in health inequities in the LGBTQ community, has also observed the gap between behavior and identification. “Among men 18 to 44, almost six percent report some sexual attraction to men in addition to women,” she explains. “And then when we look at behavior,



about five percent of men in the 18-to-44 age group report having had oral sex with another man in their lifetime.” This data stands in stark contrast to the NSFG study’s 1.8 percent of men who self-identify as bisexual.

The behavior-identification gap is shrinking at a slower pace for men. That’s largely due to stigma: Conron’s research has shown that societal attitudes toward female sexuality are more open and fluid, while tolerance for men who have slept with other men is still low. After all, “No homo” and “That’s so gay” linger in our lexicon.

“Bisexual men aren’t stupid — they know to anticipate a negative reaction,” says Brian Dodge, professor at Indiana University Bloomington’s School of Public Health. “We’ve had participants in studies say, ‘I’d lose my family, I’d lose my kids, I’d lose everything.’ Disclosure is complicated.”

A leading researcher on male bisexuality, Dodge conducted a study on biases toward bisexual people. He explored people’s perceptions in relation to five common stereotypes: that bi people are confused, prone to sexually transmitted infections, unfaithful, promiscuous and/or going through a phase. From there, he created BIAS (Bisexualities: Indiana Attitudes Scale) to measure those attitudes. Dodge believes the most damaging notions concern erasure — the belief that bisexual people are confused or that their sexuality is temporary. He explains that bisexuality requires constant validation, “whereas when someone says, ‘I’m gay,’ it’s just sort of taken at face value now. None of the stereotypes are fun, but the invalidation of existence — you’re confused, you’re just experimenting — all those things fall under that umbrella.”

Regarding the idea that bisexual people are more likely to be unfaithful in relationships, neither Dodge nor Conron have seen data to support that assumption. And when it comes to STI risk, recent statistical research shows that the numbers of heterosexual men and bisexual men who are HIV- positive are likely nearly identical.

Even within their own populations, bisexual people face daunting challenges when it comes to identity. We’ve seen new language emerge in recent years to articulate a greater number of sexual categories — fluid, heteroflexible, pansexual — and while that is undoubtedly a good thing, it can create a fracturing effect. People are claiming myriad sexual minorities because there are more words to describe their orientations and desires, but with each categorization comes a need to belong within that category. Bisexuals are getting siloed within their own community.

And then there’s the problematic connotation of “bi”: The term *bisexual* has come under scrutiny for excluding nonbinary and transgender people. But shrugging off a word that has helped define you, especially from the margins, is easier said than done. And in recent studies Dodge has noted that people with identities outside the binary are the most accepting of bisexuality, followed by gay and lesbian people — and, lastly, heterosexual men.

The combination of tensions within the LGBTQ community and poor attitudes from the heterosexual mainstream leads to double discrimination. It’s not hard to imagine the effect that prolonged societal stigma and lack of solidarity would have on mental health: Bisexual individuals consistently report higher rates of mental health disorders, substance abuse and suicidal ideation, even when compared with other groups within the LGBTQ community.

Despite it all, men are thinking about bisexuality. They’re googling it. They may even be engaging in it — though not many of

**“FOR A LONG
TIME MY LINE
WAS ‘I’M THE
ONLY BISEXUAL
MAN I KNOW,
BUT I’VE
FUCKED A LOT
OF STRAIGHT
GUYS.’ “**

them are coming out. But they do exist, and they have a lot to say. I sat down with five men to talk about what it’s like being bi and proud in #20BiTeen.

ON TERMINOLOGY

DOMINIC MINOR

Age: 29

Location: Minneapolis

Occupation: sales

Status: single

I identify as bi in addition to identifying as queer. Even though I’m relatively young, I’m still old-school, so I kind of existed before there was really language outside the binary.

TRAVON FREE

Age: 34

Location: Los Angeles

Occupation: TV/movie writer; comedian

Status: single

Bisexual is not an exclusion of anything else; I will literally date anyone. The term implies two but also everything else under that umbrella of identity.

GRAHAM ROEBUCK

Age: 30

Location: Toronto

Occupation: sales (eyewear industry)

Status: dating a gender-nonconforming person

I think there’s value in bisexual as a reclaimed term, because at a certain point it was used disparagingly. To take that term and own it, I think there’s power in that.

ON COMING OF AGE

FREE: Where I grew up, in Compton, you don’t want to be anything

but straight. I knew as a child I was different, but I didn't have a word for it; I didn't have any way of even knowing what it was. The world is built to tell you that boys like girls and girls like boys, so because that felt natural too, it didn't feel like I was pretending. But then you get to high school — I remember seeing a guy and being like, I kind of see him the same way I see her. And because I didn't know anything about *bisexuality*, it was like, Am I gay? And then once I started having sex with my high school girlfriend, I was like, Well, it's definitely not that, but what is this other thing? There was no way to explore anything sexual with a boy where I was growing up, so it became a thing that just sat in my mind. I remember googling around and stumbling on bisexuality. I read the description and was like, Oh, maybe this is me. This feels like home.

JASON ELLIS

Age: 47

Location: Los Angeles

Occupation: SiriusXM radio host

Status: married to a woman

I had a crush on [Metallica frontman] James Hetfield, but I didn't want to have sex with him at all. It would be a complete ruiner if he were to take his pants off. But I definitely wanted to have sex with Olivia Newton-John and Joan Jett.

JACK MOORE

Age: 31

Location: Los Angeles

Occupation: writer and producer

Status: dating a woman

You go through those weird junior-high times where you're at a sleepover and they put on porn and there's a low-key circle jerk happening. I found myself more drawn to the other dudes jerking off than to whatever porn was on TV. So for a while you walk around with that rattling around in your head: *Am I gay? Am I gay? Am I gay? I must be gay.* Then at some point you think, No, I still really love watching straight porn. I would ask my gay friends, "You know that gay thing where you still love eating pussy?" and they would be like, "No, I do not know that thing." So instead of identifying as bi, you think, Well, maybe I'm going through a healthy experimentation phase. Then you're like, I'm straight but experienced. And then you realize, No, I still really wanna give blow jobs, and those things aren't mutually exclusive.

At some point, coming out as bisexual is less of a decision than it is throwing up your arms and being okay with all of the above. Sometimes the right answer is that there is no answer, or that it's all an answer. It's not this one moment where you're like, "Oh, I'm bisexual!" It's this long journey to a shoulder shrug.

ON COMING OUT

ROEBUCK: I live a double life a little bit. Heterosexuality is the assumed default, so it's easy to just let people assume that and accept the privileges that come along with it, but at the same time I wish it was easier to not have to do that. There have been a lot of times when I haven't been out at my workplace because I have a fear of not being believed or of people thinking I'm doing it for attention. I can sort of tell by people's attitudes that they might not react in a positive way, so I'm not going to bring it up. I'm trying to work on that.

ELLIS: Coming out was a very long process. I had someone tell me, "It's okay you're bi, but you better not tell anybody, because it'll end your business." I see where he was coming from: It was about people not being cool about it because I'm so hetero- looking. I'm into boxing, I have guns, I have children — all the things you're

not "supposed" to have. They just don't understand the other side. They're not trying to be mean. They'll say, "Whoa, you're fuckin' *what?*" But even that's hurtful.

MOORE: There were a few months when I went off the ladies altogether and was like, This is what it's like to be gay. But even then I never came out, because it still didn't feel right. The whole coming-out-as-bi process is this long, drawn-out thing of trying on hats and being like, No, this one doesn't quite fit right and neither does this one, until you're just like, Wow, I think I just like all the hats.

ON DATING AND RELATIONSHIPS

FREE: With women, it's having to reassure them that all the misconceptions they have about bi men just aren't true. It always feels like an interview, like an interrogation. It's not like I'm with you and I'm going to say, "You're great, but I'd really love a guy." Like I'm craving a burger or something — that's how they think it works! "I know I've been a vegetarian for a long time, but, man, I could go for a steak. It's been so long and there are so many steakhouses!" If I'm in love with you, and I'm dating you, that's what we're doing.

MOORE: I was literally called a faggot by a liberal woman I was on a date with in 2011 after she had just confessed to me that she was bisexual. I have to say I don't fault her, because I think she had a lot of internalized homophobia, but she essentially said, "It's different for boys, and you know that."

ELLIS: With guys, my dynamic is "You're my friend and we have sex." I can love you like I have love for my guy friends I don't have sex with, and if I sleep with a gay guy, we're just friends, not lovers.

MINOR: The idea that I'll leave a woman for a man is hilarious. It's just you trying to escape the fact that I'll leave you for you, which is the only reason I'm gonna leave.

ON ERASURE

ROEBUCK: I think a lot of times people assume that if you're in a straight-presenting relationship you're somehow not bisexual anymore — or in the opposite sense, that you've picked a side. But that's not how it works. My sexual identity doesn't change depending on who I'm dating; it remains the same.

MOORE: The number of gay men who say to me, "Oh, honey, I was bi for a little bit; you'll come around," infuriates me. And then I have bisexual friends who are more femme, and nobody believes them. People look at me and are like, "Yeah, he wants to talk to me about LeBron James — that's something a woman-fucker would say." Whereas with one of my friends who's much femmier, people are like, "Oh no, he's definitely gay." Don't presume to know what somebody wants.

MINOR: I've doubted it, and I've had it doubted by other people. Doubting my sexuality is the same to me as doubting my blackness. When you're in a marginalized group based on external factors, you don't get the choice. Especially in black culture: If you suck dick, you're gay. Period. You will be responded to, reacted to and treated as gay. You can question all these things, but does it change how you're responded to? I can feel white all day, but I'm still gonna be black.

ON COMMUNITY

MOORE: It's hard to be bisexual. Straight people don't really want you and gay people don't really want you, so it's easier to be closeted about it. Sometimes it's easier to identify as gay when you're with a man and as straight when you're with a woman,

“I GET TO WALK OUTSIDE EVERY DAY AND KNOW THAT MY LOVE ISN’T LIMITED TO MALE OR FEMALE, AND THAT IT ALLOWS ME TO SEE SO MUCH BEAUTY IN SO MANY PEOPLE.”

because who would want to be lost between gay people and straight people who are telling you that you don’t exist?

FREE: I personally don’t feel I have a community within the community. I see so many things done in the name of LGBTQ events and fundraisers and all types of things, but no one acknowledges the fact that everything gays and lesbians feel in terms of stressors, mental health and things like suicide are experienced multiple times over by bi people, because they don’t have a community within the straight community and they don’t have a community within their own community — with the people who should be accepting and protecting them.

ELLIS: I don’t feel connected to the community at all. I want to be more a part of it, because I don’t see people who look like me out there talking. There is a community in there. Most of the time it’s organized adults having a really good time, and I feel like people don’t even know about it. I’m so happy I’ve gotten to experience that, because if I had stayed closed off maybe I never would have understood how much enjoyment I could have in my life.

ON VISIBILITY

MOORE: This is changing, but for a long time my line for this was “I’m the only bisexual man I know, but I’ve fucked a lot of straight guys.” It’s getting better, but that’s still the situation for the most part.

MINOR: I believe that as a culture, men are conditioned to hide [their bisexual desires], and they’re stubborn enough to do it for their entire lives. I believe that hundreds of thousands of men who have the potential to be in love and live their best life and have plenty of same-sex experiences will just go without it because of conditioning and whatnot. So in practice, I don’t see a lot of bi men.

FREE: I’ve always felt that if I have to die for my identity, I’m okay with that. If you’re going to be visible, on some level you have to make peace with that. To me, the silence is worse, because if we remain silent, it allows their voices to grow. I think we’ve made the progress we’ve made because we’ve refused to be silent.

I’m not even saying don’t be afraid. Feel the fear and walk through it, because every time you’ve come out the other side

unscathed or breathing, you’ve gotten that much stronger. When people say things like “Be fearless and be brave,” it’s like, no — you can be fearful, but do it anyway.

ON FREEDOM

FREE: I love that I get to experience the best of men and women. I love that I get to walk outside every day and know that my love isn’t limited to male or female, and that it allows me to see so much beauty in so many people who identify as so many things across the spectrum. I feel the world is so much more beautiful to me because I’m not stuck in one camp.

ROEBUCK: I think having accepted my own bisexuality has led me down a path of being more accepting of other gender expressions and all sorts of things, and I think it’s been really healthy. I started painting my nails recently. I’m not brave enough to wear it to work, but I do it on my days off. It has let me think of new ways to express myself, I guess. I don’t have to be pigeonholed into one path of what masculinity can be.

MINOR: I’m an equal-opportunity ho! I don’t have to play a character. I’m showing up in my sweatshirt and bucket hat, and I just might be kissing a guy, I might be kissing a girl, I might be kissing a neither, and that’s just what’s up. Same bucket hat, different partner, and people appreciate that because it contributes to the visual of what bi means. You don’t have to always present it, which hopefully gets across the message that you can’t assume. I kind of like that I pass as straight and I’ll walk in and be like, “Yeah, suckin’ dick was crazy.”

MOORE: People always use that Maya Angelou quote “When someone tells you who they are, believe them” to talk about evil people, but I want to flip that on its head and make it about bisexuality. When someone tells you who they are, believe them. Don’t act like you know better, because you definitely don’t.

ELLIS: If I had to [pretend to be straight], I would break. Something would break. I’ve done that. I can’t not be me. I like hanging out with my kids, I like the sun, I like skateboarding, I like having sex with guys. A lot. That’s my thing — you can’t take that away from me. It’s who I am. ■





SPECTACULAR

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Such an absolute honor to have you on Playboy! Talk to us about your career and what made you get into the industry? I wanted to create a lifestyle career that allowed me the freedom to innovate and design new experiences, meet unique new friends and be independent.

What is your favorite thing to do? I love to run and play with my dogs.

What does it mean for you to be seen as a strong, intelligent, ambitious woman? It means a lot to me! I always put my whole heart into what I do, especially my job and family. I feel it's important to try hard in life.

What would you say makes you stand out in the industry? This industry allows me the freedom to be independent and to set new

trends that are relevant to the times.

What puts the biggest smile on your face? I love simplicity. My heart smiles when I can enjoy that simplicity with new friends.

What are some of your biggest passions? I am passionate about learning. I am a voracious reader and absolutely love new experiences.

3 ultimate deal breakers when it comes to men? Rude behavior and self-centered and narcissistic personalities are a sure turnoff.

What are some of the things that attract you to a man? Humor, humor, and more humor. It also helps to be generous, open-minded, and kind.

What is the most daring thing you have ever done? Leaving my job as a grade school teacher and designing my new career.

What is the best way to approach you as an admirer? Politely!

Where can our readers catch up with you and stay updated with your work? My social media is the best way. I can be found on Instagram @Brisandslv and Twitter @BriLV.

We are so happy to have gotten to know you a little bit! Any last words out there for our readers? It's been fun sharing a bit about myself with you and your readers. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity.











PLAYBOY

THE RIT AG E

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA • KINUKO Y. CRAFT • THOMAS PAGE
MCBEE • A PRO-CHOICE PLATFORM • THE NAKED TRUTH: NUDE
DUDES IN PLAYBOY

APOCALYPSE *THEN*

AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE MEMORABLE
PLAYMATE SCENE FROM FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA'S
OSCAR-WINNING 1979 CLASSIC

BY
STEVE PALOPOLI

On the great and sprawling road map of American culture, the distance between PLAYBOY magazine and Francis Ford Coppola's masterpiece *Apocalypse Now* is, surprisingly, just a short jaunt — perhaps one best traversed by helicopter.

Among the movie's many indelible scenes is a five-minute sequence, possibly inspired by actual events, in which Playmates put on a show for servicemen — or try to. Against the *chugga-chugga* thump of whirring blades, a Rabbit Head-emblazoned chopper descends from the night sky onto a brightly lit stage as hundreds of G.I.s scream in anticipation. An unfazed Captain Willard (Martin Sheen), leading his soldiers upriver to hunt the renegade Colonel Kurtz (Marlon Brando) when they unexpectedly encounter the USO show emceed by Bill Graham, joins the audience. As three Playmates — portrayed by Colleen Camp and real-life Centerfolds Cyndi Wood (1974 Playmate of the Year) and Linda Carpenter (August 1976, as Linda Beatty) — emerge from the helicopter and begin shimmying to "Suzie Q," the crowd grows frenzied. Soon enough, the soldiers rush the platform, forcing the performers to depart. Like the movie as a whole, the scene brilliantly captures a frightening aspect of humanity: the menace of men driven to extremes.



“IT WAS ALL, I’M SURE, VERY DANGEROUS, BUT
THROUGHOUT THE SHOOTING WE DIDN’T LOSE
ONE PERSON. SO MANY THINGS CAN GO WRONG.”



Previous page: In the film, February 1973 Playmate and PMOY 1974 Cyndi Wood takes on a role close to her heart—Playmate of the Year. She recalls that during her downtime on the set, and even in the midst of a typhoon, she liked to write original songs. **Above:** A scene featuring Colleen Camp that built on her real-life experience as a bird trainer was filmed but later cut from the original release; part of it can be seen in *Apocalypse Now Redux*. **Right:** Camp (top left), Linda Carpenter (top right) and Wood atop a helicopter bearing the Rabbit Head insignia.



In 1974, when Coppola started to consider directing *Apocalypse Now*, pretty much everyone around him thought it was a bad idea. As proven by Coppola's previous critical and box office successes — *The Godfather*, *The Godfather Part II* and *The Conversation* — gangsters, gritty realism and paranoia were the currency of New Hollywood. War movies were hopelessly uncool, especially ones about Vietnam, from which the U.S. had just withdrawn. But Coppola decided to take on the project and headed into the jungles of the Philippines — then under martial law and in the middle of a bloody civil conflict — where he turned a 1969 script by John Milius into a hallucinogenic antiwar epic. Despite legendary delays, when the film debuted in 1979 it won the Cannes Film Festival's highest honor and was nominated for eight Oscars, winning for cinematography and sound.

The movie has more than endured; it has evolved. In 2001 an expanded re-edit, *Apocalypse Now Redux*, restored 49 minutes to the film, including an additional Playmate story line involving helicopter fuel (as well as a brief connecting scene in which Willard's crew members talk about a U.S. soldier so obsessed with his PLAYBOY's that he kills a South Vietnamese officer who damages one). Kim Aubry, a producer on *Redux*, found inspiration in the original Playmate segment. "The USO scene was one of the realest moments I'd ever seen in cinema. There was something about it that felt almost like a documentary and yet surreal at the same time," he says. "It's so incredibly powerful and political."

Indeed, it's that kind of reaction that has contributed to the film's remarkable staying power. This year Coppola will release what he considers the definitive director's version, *Apocalypse Now: Final Cut*, which will of course include the iconic USO scene. To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the original release, we present the never-before-told oral history of how the Playmate scenes came to be, as related by those who were involved.

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Unexpected disasters delayed but never derailed the ambitious production.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA, director: I remember looking at the USO set with the head of the art department and saying, "I made a big mistake. As they approach from the river, they ought to see a glimpse of this place." We had built the set really far off the river, and you had to drive for a while. From a dramatic standpoint it would have been better if, when they're in the boat, they look and say, "What the hell is that?" He said, "Well, we put it in the wrong place." I said, "Yeah, but we'll make it work." And that's when we were hit by the typhoon that destroyed everything.

CYNDI WOOD, actress and 1974 PMOY: Every time they'd plan to do our scene, something would happen. On one trip, the day I arrived, Marty Sheen had a heart attack, so they shut down production for six weeks. Another time, I arrived just in time for what was probably the largest typhoon of the decade. All of a sudden, without warning, everybody's running, shouting "Take cover! Take cover!" and this typhoon comes raging through. We were trapped in an abandoned building in the jungle, far away from the set and the rest of the crew, with no way to communicate, no telephones. It was so loud. Here I am, 25 and pretty innocent, and all these grown men around me were scared to death that everybody was going to die.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: We had to stop shooting for three or four weeks. It was a major event; it destroyed the USO set, and we had to rebuild it. So I said, "Well, this time let's rebuild it right on the river so that we can correct the mistake we made." And they did.

ROLE PLAYING

Some parts were filled by eager actors (with one photographer determined to document the production); others took time and effort to cast.

CYNDI WOOD: I didn't go looking for the part. I believe they called me in; I didn't have to audition. I was involved, believe it or not, for four years on that film — though I wasn't there all the time.

COLLEEN CAMP, actress: I had done a movie called *Smile*, which was filmed in the Bay Area and Santa Rosa. Fred Roos, coproducer of *Apocalypse Now*, came to visit that location in 1975, and I met him there. Fast-forward to when he was casting *Apocalypse Now*. I met with Fred, Francis and producer Gray Frederickson, and at first I did not want to do any nudity. But Cyndi Wood, who was Playmate of the Year, was a very close friend of mine.

NANCY MORAN, on-set photographer: I was a freelance photographer in Vietnam in the early 1970s. Gloria Emerson was a wonderful reporter for *The New York Times*, and I took pictures for many of her Vietnam stories. We worked together a lot. She was very critical of my going [to the *Apocalypse Now* set in the Philippines]; she thought it was too soon to make a movie like that, because it would take away from the war in a way. That kind of feeling was going around. I mean, it was very soon after the war ended.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: One of the Playmates we had cast before the place was wrecked by the storm was Lynda Carter — who, when we were able to start again three weeks later, couldn't come back because she had just been cast as Wonder Woman. So we cast Colleen Camp. We had Cyndi Wood, Colleen Camp and Linda Carpenter — all beautiful, very nice young women — and they worked with the choreographer to work out a little routine.

COLLEEN CAMP: One night I went to the Palm Restaurant on Santa Monica Boulevard with Fred Roos and Cyndi Wood. At that dinner, Fred and Cyndi convinced me I should replace Lynda Carter and rethink the nudity — which I did. So I got cast.

NANCY MORAN: Every day I called the publicity department at United Artists [the U.S. distributor for *Apocalypse Now*] and asked, "Do you want to hire me to go out there?" Finally they did. They wanted someone who'd actually been in Vietnam. I stayed in the Philippines for almost two months in 1976.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: We had to find many, many young men who could look like G.I.s, and we were of course in a place where there were few. We did a lot of work to locate army installations and educational institutions. That was a big and difficult effort. [For the role of the MC] I was fortunate to have a friend, Bill Graham — rest in peace — who was a famous rock promoter but always wanted to be an actor ever since he was a kid and first saw John Garfield in a movie. He was a remarkably wonderful person, Bill Graham.

COLLEEN CAMP: When I went to the Philippines in November 1976, it changed my life. I was 23 years old. It's martial law; there's 400 men and three women. The sequence that we filmed was unbelievable.

THE ALL-NIGHTER

The Playmate USO scene was shot in one single marathon night of filmmaking that included a variety of challenges.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: We knew that it was meant to be an incredible contradiction — which was not untrue — where the Americans had sort of brought their whole culture into this ancient, primeval jungle. So that was the fun of it, as it were. And of course

the challenge was that this unlikely show-business show should be deposited right there in the midst of antiquity. Obviously it was night, so the photographer had to figure out how the hell he would see it. He came up with this concept of these almost rafts with banks of lights on them, which were there to illuminate the scene.

COLLEEN CAMP: Our call time was about two in the afternoon, and we shot till about six in the morning. It was amazing. Here we are, in the middle of the Philippines. We had to be really careful because of the helicopter blades, and the pilots were 18, 19 years old — they were very young. I remember we had to get out of the helicopter onto that little tiny strip and just start dancing.

CYNDI WOOD: That little routine was nothing, but we shot for 16 hours straight and had to do it over and over again. They had to get different angles, and they shot the audience, and they did this and that. I collapsed on the stage from exhaustion. I've never been that tired in my life. They brought in a doctor, and he gave me a couple of B12 injections. That was kind of intense.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: Supplying the people, and their safety, food and bathroom facilities, was in itself a major operation. Once we had it all together, we just shot through the night. The reason it took so many hours to shoot was it involved difficult stunts — when the helicopter flies up and there are still guys hanging on to it and they drop into the water.

It was all, I'm sure, very dangerous, but throughout the shooting, we did not lose one person in the entire year and a half, two years. As a director working on a play or a movie, that's the greatest fear you have, because the people working so hard and so many hours have their minds on what they're doing and not on

their own safety. You're constantly emphasizing safety, and so many things can go wrong.

NANCY MORAN: It was a long night, and I remember thinking it was amazing that they could do all this at once. It was so much work, but it was a very funny scene — here's this boat going downriver, and all of a sudden they come across these Playmates. It's just a wonderful, surreal idea.

Colleen had a wonderful sense of humor on the set. Cyndi's the only one who could dance, but that adds to the goofy charm of the whole thing, I think. The guys were supposed to go nuts, which is absolutely believable, and start leaping onto the stage. But it's like — and this is one of the things about the movie—how much control do you have over hundreds of extras? If I had been Colleen or Cyndi or Linda, I think it would have been scary to have all these guys come jumping out.

COLLEEN CAMP: When the G.I.s started to rush the stage, it was actually scary. It was very quick — the girls get scared, they have to get back into the helicopter, and they're hurried off the stage. But it was actually planned out really well, so we weren't in any danger — except that, you know, helicopters are extremely dangerous.

CYNDI WOOD: When they rushed the stage, I don't remember being aware that that was going to happen. Francis did that a lot — you wouldn't know what was going to take place, so you would react naturally. He was an incredible director.

THE REAL VIETNAM PLAYMATE

Playboy lore has it that the USO scene was inspired by Playmate Jo Collins's much more practical 1966 trip to Vietnam.



GARY COLE, former PLAYBOY photography director, who oversaw the magazine's 1979 *Apocalypse Finally* pictorial: Back in those days, before a Playmate could appear in a film, Playboy had to approve the filmmaker or approve the script or something, because they didn't want the girls appearing in porno or really crap movies if it could be helped. Obviously, because Coppola was involved, I think we skipped that step.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: Everyone hassled us, from the Department of Defense on. Playboy could have easily said, "We do not want you to depict the Playboy logo on that helicopter." They could have done anything they wanted; it was their imagery. But they basically left us alone, and I was always very appreciative.

ELIZABETH NORRIS, former PLAYBOY senior director of public relations: In the 1960s, a lifetime subscription was deliverable by a Playmate. During the Vietnam war, a group of guys in the 173rd Airborne Brigade pooled their money, and one of them, Jack Price, ordered a lifetime subscription. They wanted a Playmate to deliver it, which was part of the deal. Long story short, 1965 Playmate of the Year Jo Collins went to the hospital in Vietnam where these men were and met them.

JO COLLINS, December 1964 Playmate and 1965 PMOY: I didn't even know where Vietnam was — I thought I was going to Europe. I had no clue. Never in a million years did I think it was going to turn out the way it did.

GARY COLE: People would say, "Oh, Playboy sent Playmates over there." Well, Jo Collins is the Playmate we sent to Vietnam who actually visited with the troops. No girls ever went over there and jumped out of a helicopter and did a go-go dance or anything like that.

JO COLLINS: When I was in Vietnam in 1966, we were in areas that were literally being bombed. We could have been blown up at any time. Scary, exciting — it was all those things. I visited as many bases and medical field centers as they allowed. I wish I could have worn attractive outfits, like the miniskirts and go-go boots [the Playmates wear in the movie].

ELIZABETH NORRIS: We have always thought Jo's Vietnam trip was the basis for that scene. However, that has never been substantiated.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: The original script, and that scene, were the work of John Milius — he's the one who was really the genius behind *Apocalypse Now*, in my opinion. I know he was well aware that there were Playboy Playmates in Vietnam. I did not know of it. I didn't base it on that; I based it on what was in the original script, which might have been inspired by that.

Far left: Director Francis Ford Coppola speaks with Camp behind the scenes, with Wood in the background. **Left:** Wood says that as the helicopter stunt was being filmed, she wasn't sure whether the G.I.s hanging from the landing skid were stuntmen or not: "Some of those things you just didn't know, because they were so spontaneous." **Top right:** As the challenging production went on, Coppola saw the movie's budget balloon from \$12 million to nearly three times that. **Bottom right:** Carpenter and Coppola on set.





Linda Carpenter, the real-life August 1976 Playmate, plays a fictional Miss August in *Apocalypse Now*. To fill the crowd with hundreds of G.I. look-alikes, the crew sought out extras at military and educational institutions in the Philippines.

LOST AND FOUND LEGACIES

Across the film's several iterations, the core Playmate scene has remained intact.

COLLEEN CAMP: In the John Milius script there was a scene that set up the girls losing the helicopter fuel with Bill Graham, and then they trade for fuel to get out. Those scenes were crucial to the subsequent scene. But the day I arrived in March 1977, Martin Sheen had a heart attack, so the scenes we were shooting never had a setup. Francis Coppola, in improvisational mode, said, "Tell me a little bit about yourself," and I said, "Well, I used to be a bird trainer at Busch Gardens." He decided to write a whole scene of me and birds in the helicopter, and a piece of it was shown in *Apocalypse Now Redux*.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: During the first typhoon, I didn't want to stop shooting, because I have always felt that if you get bad weather, that's an opportunity to have something really extraordinary. You might as well shoot. So we all went during the typhoon, and the crew tried to put the set back together. The rain was coming down unbelievably. That's when we shot the scene where they go to the medevac camp, which was in the typhoon. And that was put back in the *Redux* version.

KIMAUBRY, *Redux* co-producer: Obviously those [fuel-related] scenes were intended to be in the film. The 1979 released version has some strange gaps where, for length and other reasons, scenes were removed, and there are certain continuity things that you don't quite get unless you see these added scenes.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: Since I had these three women, and they were all uniquely talented and had their own stories, I shot three additional sequences in this scene — which would now be extremely bad in the #MeToo movement — where Bill Graham sort of trades the girl for fuel. This is not something

that would go over very well in today's political climate. The point I was trying to make was that in a way the abuse of sending a 17-year-old boy to Vietnam to drop napalm on people is as immoral as what is done to these young, beautiful girls at 17. That was a symbol of abuse — what we do to the young men, we also do to the young girls in our so-called civilization.

COLLEEN CAMP: When the movie came out, initially I was upset. All my scenes were cut because we weren't able to shoot a scene to set them up. At the end of the day, it was a lesson. You can't control things. It was a very important thing to learn, and I was lucky to learn it at that age.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: Tribeca is going to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the movie, and they said to me, "Which version do you want to show, the original 1979 version or the much longer *Redux* version?" The 1979 version was very abruptly cut to be short, because at the time the movie came out, no one knew what its fate was going to be. A lot of people said it was too long and too weird. I didn't really like the original version, but I also felt the *Redux* version was too long. So I said, "What I'd really like to do now is what I think is the best version — what I would say is Francis's version, the one I prefer." And that ultimately got done, and I am very pleased with it. What's available in 2019 for color and sound is so beyond what it was when we first made the movie that it looks and sounds unbelievable. *Apocalypse Now: Final Cut* has the Playmate show, of course, but it does not have the medevac scene.

CYNDI WOOD: Working on the film was truly an incredible experience, scary as it was. We were in a solid concrete building with no glass in the windows when the biggest typhoon hit. It was so loud, it was deafening, like at any moment the whole building would cave in. This is going to sound weird, but I've never felt more alive in my whole life. ■

HERITAGE SPOTLIGHT

A KALEIDOSCOPIC TALENT



*An appreciation of artist
Kinuko Craft, whose
ingenuity graced PLAYBOY's
pages across five decades*

BY **CAT AUER**

One day in 1974, Kinuko Yamabe Craft handdelivered to Playboy's Chicago office a set of paintings she'd been commissioned to create for the magazine. Designed to accompany a "ribald classic," Craft's elaborate wood-panel triptych (right) and two additional works were so skillfully done, from the intricate medieval Russian iconography to the faux-distressed gold-leaf frames, that they looked as if they'd been lifted from the walls of a museum.

Stunned, associate art director Kerig Pope dropped to his knees and kissed her feet.

"I was astounded by how well she did it," says Pope. "It had a very authentic look, and I was terribly impressed. It's kind of embarrassing for me; she probably thought, What kind of weirdo is this?"

Craft was unfazed by Pope's enthusiasm. Still a working artist today at the age of 79, she says that her many PLAYBOY projects gave her the opportunity to learn about other artists and their techniques. "worked like a school for me," she says. "It was the most effective training I ever got."

Having begun in 1967 with an assignment from founding art director Arthur Paul, Craft continued to work for PLAYBOY through 2000. Across those five decades, her phenomenal gift for working in whatever medium and style the task at hand required — including art deco, biblical, trompe l'oeil, even nursery-rhyme illustration — is on display in more than 100 magazine pieces.

• • •

From the moment she picked up her big sister's crayons and drew a mountain landscape on a sliding screen in her family home in Kanazawa, Japan at the age of two, Craft knew she was an artist. "That was the first huge painting I did," she says. "Nobody scolded me — I'm so grateful!"

Another early moment had an indelible effect on the nascent artist. "My grandmother was carrying me on her back. Outside was the forest, in beautiful sunlight. A stray bamboo leaf, stuck to the end of a cobweb, twirling with the breeze. The sunlight hit the wooden sash, and I thought it was the most beautiful thing," she says. "It is etched in my mind. That was the first full awareness of being surrounded by beauty."

Ever since, Craft has gravitated toward beauty and endeavored to capture it in her work. "Unfortunately, I'm a mere mortal," she says, "and so I can't grab it."

After obtaining a fine art degree in Japan, Craft moved to the States in late 1964 for graduate study at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Arriving in the thick of a miserable winter, she almost turned on her heel and fled. "No leaves on the trees, and it was desolate, so lonely looking," she recalls. "And the cold! It was colder than any cold I knew."

But she stuck it out and began her studies in 1965, frequently visiting the eponymous museum next door to wonder at the master works within. After a year and a half, Craft left school and started working within Chicago's studio system, which she describes as "a bunch of illustrators sitting and waiting for salesmen to bring jobs." It wasn't long before her portfolio found its



way to Art Paul and she accepted her first PLAYBOY assignment: an illustration for a wry short story about urban bohemians. From there the PLAYBOY commissions kept coming in, engaging her virtuoso artistry for everything from fiction, humor, essays and tech stories to a sex survey.

"With her sophisticated citation of many strands from Western art's tradition of visual fantasy, Craft clearly has high expectations for her audience's wider cultural knowledge," writes professor Lorraine Janzen Kooistra about Craft's PLAYBOY paintings for another ribald classic: Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*. Hieronymus Bosch, Botticelli and Arthur Rackham are among the visual references Kooistra notes in the playfully wicked paintings.

Craft's versatility also caught the eye of novelist and cultural critic Ray Bradbury. "Kinuko Craft is an artist for all seasons, for all kinds of subjects, and in all kinds of styles," he writes in his 1985 volume *The Art of Playboy*. "She fits herself to her subject with charming ease and yet leaves herself free to remain herself. Her illustrations suggest one who is a true connoisseur of art, widely ranging through all the countries of the world."

Bradbury goes on: "One cannot help but think how delightful it would be to walk into a gallery full of the fruits of her kaleidoscopic talents." (We're happy to report that one can, simply by flipping through the PLAYBOY archive.) Years later, Craft would illustrate *The Witch Door*, one of Bradbury's original PLAYBOY short stories.

Other notable authors whose stories were paired with Craft's creations include Paul Theroux, John Collier and T.C. Boyle. Alice K. Turner, PLAYBOY's fiction editor from 1980 to 2001, described her as "one of our very best artists."

Writer Gore Vidal was so taken with one of Craft's paintings for his 1978 story *Kalki* that she and the magazine decided to give it to him. But in trying to compliment her work, Vidal unintentionally slighted her. "When he received it, he said, 'I usually don't like illustration, but I like this one.' It's offensive," Craft says, laughing. "I wanted to say, 'What's wrong with illustration?'"

Outside of PLAYBOY, Craft worked for advertising agencies, textbook publishers and other magazines including *Time*, *Newsweek*, *National Geographic*, *The Atlantic* and *Forbes*. Rarely given much time to complete her projects and reluctant to turn down work, Craft frequently pulled all-nighters to meet deadlines, drinking a single cup of cold green tea to stay awake.

“YOU CAN FEEL THE PAINTER’S PASSION IMPRISONED IN THE CANVAS.”

“Everything that was flying my way, I caught it. It was one of those aggressive periods. I have to do it, I want to do it,” she says. “That was the passion I had — even for math-book illustrations.”

In the first decades of her career, illustration was a maledominated field, as Pope recalls. Craft faced additional barriers, especially at smaller agencies and publications. “When they looked at me, all they saw was Asian. ‘Bring me the Asian samples from your portfolio next time,’ ” Craft says potential clients would tell her. “Not being born in this country, and speaking with an accent, was not advantageous.”

But Craft recalls PLAYBOY as being fair and welcoming. “They looked at me as a painter, just a painter,” she says. “PLAYBOY was gender blind, color blind.”

Craft’s work has been shown in galleries across the country, and she was inducted into the Society of Illustrators hall of fame in

2008. Her paintings have graced the covers and pages of dozens of books, and her work is in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian.

...

In the early 1980s Craft left Chicago for the East Coast to settle into more rural environs. “I love trees more than humans, I think,” she says. High on a hill in the forests of Connecticut, a black bear visits her big backyard and plays with the birdseed cakes, sometimes bringing its cubs. It’s a setting Craft vastly prefers to city life, though living in a rural area has had its complications; she recalls sending canvases on their own to New York via bus.

Though the advent of faxing and later FedEx made it much easier to deliver sketches and final art to clients, not all technological advances have resonated with Craft. Digital art in particular holds no allure. “At a museum, you can feel the painter’s passion imprisoned in the canvas,” she says. “When it’s printed, everything — structure, composition, idea — is there, but not the passion. Digital gives me the same feeling. It’s beautiful, but somehow not enough.”

The artwork Craft produced for PLAYBOY spanned multiple genres, but today she paints mostly in a style of fantastical realism. Her newer work frequently features strong women characters such as Eleanor of Aquitaine, the 12th century queen.

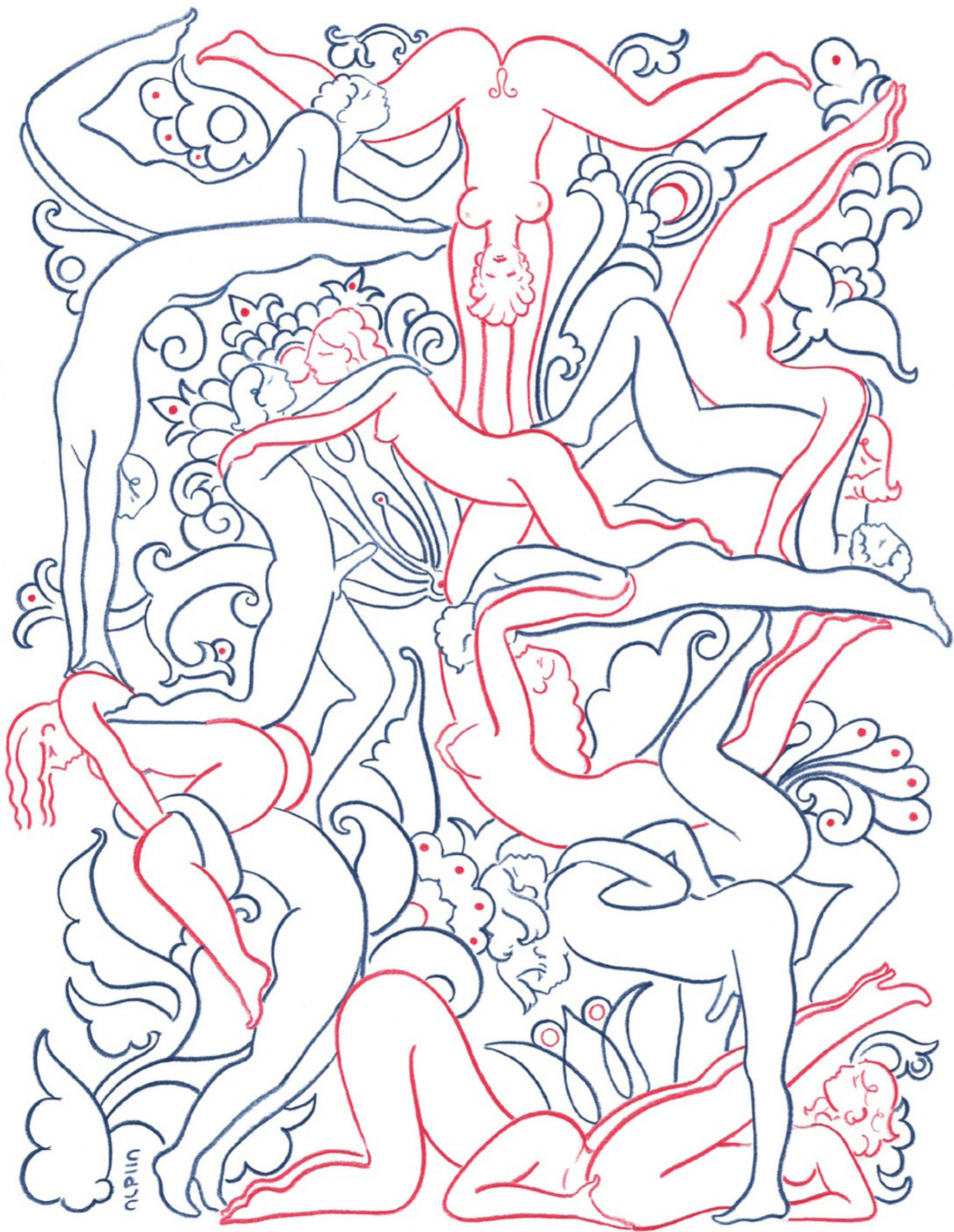
“I’m becoming a militant for women’s rights,” Craft says. “Y chromosome is not that great!”

These days she sells her original canvases through the Borsini-Burr Gallery in California. She’s hard at work on an oil painting of a “winter general” who marched from the depths of her imagination — a powerful white-haired woman wearing armor and wielding a sword. For such works the initial drawing can take up to a week, followed by session after session of painting with her brushes, which she likens to feeding: “If the painting takes longer, I have to feed her again. It’s very hard. I’m 79 years old and work like I’m 49!”

Taxing though it may be, Craft has no plans to stop painting, finding purpose in endlessly chasing a connection to beauty and to nature. “There’s something I want to grasp, which always eludes me. I think I’m going to feel that till the end of my life,” Craft says. “My poor bones can’t rest. I have to do what I’m wired to do.” ■



*Detail of Craft’s illustration for a June 1987 PLAYBOY fiction piece titled **The Egret**. **Opposite:** The triptych Craft created to accompany *The Gabrieliad*, Alexander Pushkin’s naughty New Testament spoof that PLAYBOY ran as a “ribald classic” in 1974. It was her first time working with gold leaf; she visited the medieval room at Chicago’s Art Institute for inspiration. **Left:** Craft in her studio, circa 1983.*



PLAYBOY ADVISOR

Dr. Chris Donaghue — certified sex therapist, director of clinical education for the Sexual Health Alliance and host of Loveline — takes on the role of Playboy Advisor and weighs in on readers' questions about oral sex, orgasm-less sex, amateur sex, sweaty sex, forbidden sex, interracial sex and more

Q: *love cunnilingus. I can go down on a woman for hours. My favorite sex position is using my tongue to make a woman come while getting myself off. And the woman almost always comes! This means I rarely have penetrative sex, as I am just fine coming without it. A woman I recently started dating tells me it's strange that masturbation gets me off better than her vagina. Should I be worried that I, a straight man, am not that into vaginal sex?—B.K*

A: The first thing to note is that her vagina is still getting you off. Rest assured that there's nothing "strange" about preferring masturbation over penetration, because there is no "correct" way to have sex. The goal of sex isn't penetration; it's achieving mutual pleasure. You deserve to feel confident and authentic in whatever helps you do that.

Further, your heterosexuality should not inform anything about your sex life other than the gender of your sexual partner (though even that is fluid nowadays). Being straight does not predetermine one's favored sex positions, nor should it restrict them. Your heterosexuality also isn't an excuse for anyone to shame you.

Yes, calling someone's sexual preferences "strange" amounts to a form of shaming, which can quickly turn abusive. Your concern should be about other nontraditional interests your girlfriend might pass judgment on. When we reveal our sexual interests to a lover, the response should be one of acceptance — as long as those interests are mindful of your partner's pleasure and cause no harm to others.

Which is why I must ask: Is your partner dissatisfied with receiving only oral sex? Has she asked you to do more than go down on her? Have you refused? If so, it's your duty to incorporate more penetration so both your desires are being fulfilled. This doesn't mean giving up what you like. Introducing a vibrator, for example, leaves one hand free for masturbation while still giving your tongue access to her clitoris.

If she has expressed that oral sex alone satisfies her, you need to tell her how her words make you feel (i.e., inadequate). Our self-worth is an accumulation of how others treat us, but you are responsible for your self-esteem. Human interactions, especially sex, are never neutral. You will always leave a sexual encounter either feeling better about yourself, your body and sex in general — or feeling bad about it all. Choose the former.

Q: *Why has adultery become so prevalent? I've witnessed three of my friends cheating — separately, though all three did it publicly and in front of me. I'm close with their partners, so their infidelities have complicated our friendships. This has made me quite cynical about dating and relationships. Overall, I don't know how to handle what I've seen. Do I call them out, tell their partners or shut my mouth and toss out my moral compass?—M.F.*

A: Simple answer: Adultery is prevalent because monogamy is hard. According to data collected by the General Social Survey from 2010 to 2016, as many as one in five men have cheated on their spouses. Comparatively, 13 percent of women have cheated on their

spouses. Those figures increase as people get older, however, suggesting that monogamy becomes more difficult with age. Meanwhile, the definition of cheating continues to evolve. According to the 2019 Playboy Sex Survey, 17 percent of female respondents did not consider sexual intercourse "a form of cheating."

The core issue driving people to cheat is not just the tension between desiring commitment and wanting the freedom to explore but also the toxic rules that govern many monogamous relationships. Toxic monogamy is the idea that you have a right to own or control your partner. This includes viewing others of the same gender as threats and not respecting your partner's privacy. (How many readers have broken into their lovers' cell phones?) Such behavior sucks the joy and sustainability out of any relationship.

Cheating is an unacceptable solution for whatever issues your friends may be trying to solve (or run from). It robs a relationship of trust, which is difficult to get back. Most of us could benefit from being honest with our partners about our needs, and that includes a desire to have sex with others while in an exclusive relationship. Deciding to do so without telling a partner is nothing short of destructive.

But let's switch back to you, the innocent bystander. I suggest speaking to each of your cheating friends individually so you can better understand their relationships. Not everyone has the same rules, and it's increasingly common for couples to enter monogamy with different expectations and dynamics. Some couples are fully open, some allow for

Orgasms are hot and fun, but they aren't guaranteed, nor should they be required. The goal isn't mutual orgasm but mutual pleasure. By expanding our definition of what we call "sex," we can create new sexual connections and new kinks.

casual make-outs and drunk flirting, and the majority are traditional and closed. Might all three of your friends be in open relationships? It's unlikely — only one in 10 people ages 25 to 34 are — but...perhaps.

While it is not your job to fix anyone's relationship (or destroy it), you should confront your friends about how they've put you in an unfair position. In the end, being a moral friend doesn't make you the moral police. If they turn on you or respond with anger, you have no reason to stay faithful to them — something they should know a thing or two about.

Q: *My husband and I have been married for 14 years. We enjoy a physically intense sex life that includes verbal degradation and sex that leaves us both bruised. We've never taken it to the point where either of us feels unsafe; only once have my bruises been large enough that I've had to cover them. I recently started bingeing HBO's Big Little Lies, and on the show, Nicole Kidman and Alexander Skarsgård's characters engage in similar sexual behavior — though the balance of power in their sex life seems less equitable. The Kidman character's therapist says she may be addicted to the pain. I never thought such a thing was possible. Is it? Could my husband and I be addicted to pain during sex? — D.B.,*

A: You shouldn't retroactively pathologize 14 years of a healthy sex life because of a fictitious plotline on a soapy TV show. For one, you cannot be "addicted" to pain. You can seek pain, enjoy it and prefer sex with it, but you cannot be addicted to it.

Our culture likes to dramatize extreme interests by deeming them "addictions." Diverse and subversive sexual acts create anxiety among sex-phobic social puritans.

Understand that the purpose of a phrase like *sex addiction*, which the American Psychiatric Association rejects, is to diagnose someone's sex life as abnormal. There's nothing psychologically wrong with intensely — or even painfully — experiencing your sexuality, as long as it's safe, consensual and with someone you trust. I work with many patients who strive to heighten their arousal, expand their sex lives and find true compatibility. You and your husband seem to have achieved all that — to which I say congratulations.

Q: *I'm a white man who has dated only chunky women of color. No one has ever commented on the similarities between my exes, but today's climate has made me hyper-aware of body shaming, misogyny and racism. Is it possible I have some underlying, unhealthy attraction to women of a particular race and body type that I'm not fully aware of?—A.P.,*

A: If I were to read your question a different way, it may sound as though you're covertly asking whether you, a white man, should sleep only with thin white women. The answer to that is an obvious no.

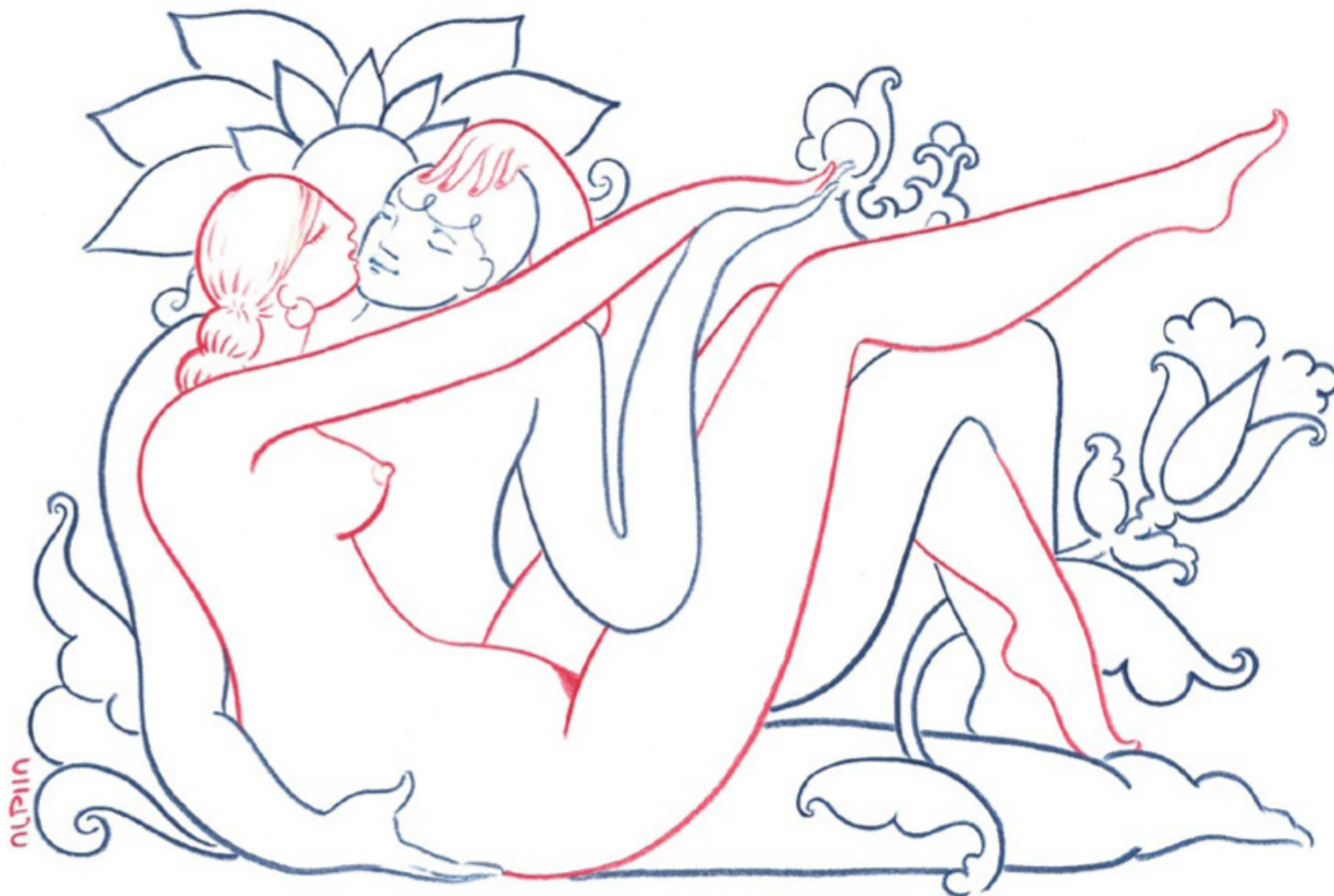
It's refreshing how aware you are that your sexuality can impact others in ways you may not fully realize. To me, this speaks to your compassion. Having compassion for people who come from different backgrounds is a goal of intersectionality. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 and defined as "the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism and classism) combine, overlap or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups," intersectionality aims to increase awareness of the power imbalances in all areas of life. That includes our sex lives.

Fetishization is the process of reducing a person to certain physical attributes and ignoring everything else about them. Thus, fetishizing larger women or women of color is indeed a problem. But I don't believe you exhibit this fetish, as your relationships with these women have all gone beyond sex. They're not sex objects; they're your partners.

It's important to be conscious of how you use your privilege and social power, but there's no politically correct form of sexual desire. Don't overthink what turns you on, and don't resist what arouses you because of identity politics. In the U.S., healthy interracial relationships have long represented two people pushing back against societal inequality. As long as you treat the women in your life like the gorgeous, intelligent, autonomous sexual beings they are, you have nothing to be concerned about.

Q: *My sister's boyfriend recently relocated from Chicago, where they were living together, to Boston, where I live, for work. As a straight woman, I find him immensely attractive and have had many sex dreams about him throughout their relationship. Now that we live in the same city, he constantly texts me to hang out. I don't trust myself around him and have gone to great lengths to avoid contact. My sister wants to know why I won't help her boyfriend settle in. It's actually causing me a lot of stress. What do I do?—K.H.,*

A: Why do you think you wouldn't be able to control your impulses if the two of you were to spend time together? I suspect you're harboring some hope of a future in which you two end up together. Sorry, but he isn't interested in having sex with you. He just wants to spend time with someone he knows in an unfamiliar city.



Your anxiety is par for the course in cases of unrequited love, but don't lose yourself in a world of what-ifs. Boston is home to many single men you could date. Don't waste your time obsessing over your sister's boyfriend, who is unavailable, as if he's your only option. He isn't.

In the meantime, make this man — a person your sister loves deeply — feel at home without becoming a home-wrecker. There are many easy ways to make this work. Socialize in public or do group activities. Don't spend time alone with each other, and don't get intoxicated together. Avoiding him isn't sustainable; should they wed, you'll be running from him till death do they part.

Q: *I'm a virgin, but I want to start having sex soon. How am I supposed to know which condom is right for me? I'm average length but thick in girth. I'm also uncircumcised. I don't want a condom to ruin the mood when it finally happens.*—J.G.,

A: Condom selection, like everything else tied to sex, is trial and error. Determining your condom size is not only important for your (and his/her) pleasure but integral to effective birth control, STI prevention and a healthy sex life. Sizing charts can be found online, but beware: The charts aren't standard across manufacturers. Condoms are also made from

different materials, such as latex, polyisoprene and polyurethane. Some feature studs, ribbing and prelubricant. Some are colored, others are flavored. All of this is to say finding the right condom goes beyond fit.

Start by investing in a few brands and various styles. Many brands come in packs of one to three and can be purchased online. Try one on and wear it while masturbating to kick-start your body into linking protection with arousal. Your first time will be awkward for a lot of unforeseeable reasons, but I can assure you that the person you take to bed will be impressed you came prepared. Oh, and asking your bedfellow to put the condom on you turns a potentially awkward moment into foreplay.

Q: *I play in a rugby league, which requires me to wear a cup. My girlfriend loves it. When I come home from a match, she tears off my uniform and asks me to fuck her while wearing my sweaty jockstrap. But pulling the cloth pouch to the side is distracting, and I can't stay hard. This has left us both frustrated by our spontaneous postgame sex sessions because neither of us finishes. What's behind my girlfriend's fetish for my dirty jockstrap, and how can I fulfill her fantasy even when my body isn't responding?*—R.T.,

A: First off, congrats on having an assertive, sexually empowered girlfriend. A confident

partner who *demand*s sex? You're luckier than you may realize. Second, your question is a perfect example of how sex helps us grow and mature, because what you view as problems — an inability to stay hard, an inability to climax—are opportunities to remind you what makes sex so great.

To start, nothing is wrong with your body. Orgasms are hot and fun, but they aren't guaranteed, nor should they be required for sex between two people to feel complete. Sex is supposed to be fun, and you don't need to finish to have fun. Fulfill her fantasy by fucking her while wearing the jockstrap. If you go soft, start using your tongue or your fingers, or bring in a toy. Put the jockstrap on her face, switch up positions, ask her to ride you or have her go down on you to bring back your erection.

The goal here isn't mutual orgasm but mutual pleasure. By expanding our definition of what we call "sex," we can create new sexual connections and new kinks.

By the way, the science behind fetishes is a theoretical guessing game, as fetishes represent a complex intersection of brain activity, cultural conditioning and personal experience. Don't sweat about what's behind a fetish (as long as it's not the identity-based variety I mentioned earlier). Just enjoy what comes next — even if you don't. ■



PLAYMATE
DANIELLE
DIAMOND

Instagram @modeldaniellediamond



Photography by **Scott Church** | @thescottchurch
MUA **Julia Ashley** | @_julia_ashley
Hair Artist **Sabrina Spiegel** | @saylonseven



PLAYMATE





PLAYMATE





We're happy to have you feature on Playboy! Can you give us a bit of a background on your career as a model and where it all started? I have always been creative. I loved fashion, nude art and traveling. My career has been very exciting. How I first. Started was approached by a modeling agent standing in line at a bank. A few weeks later I left for a test shoot in Los Angeles. I started out doing fitness clothes. Then went straight to artistic nudes.

Having a full schedule must make it difficult for you to get much alone time, talk to us about the top 3 must-dos to ensure you fit in some well-deserved down time? I love to travel; I have a passport and I use it. I love going and getting spa treatments. I Enjoy nature, whether that means going for walks. Or taking a ride on a scenic road.

What does it mean for you to be seen as a strong, intelligent, ambitious woman? My vision, voice, and actions help me to stay in alignment of who I am. What I want out of life.

What are some of the biggest misconceptions people have about what you do? That if I'm invited to a social gathering, I wear something that is too sexy or act Inappropriately.

What does freedom of self-expression mean to you? It has been very healing to me. I was once very shy and reserved. I was a long journey for me to feel more comfortable in my own skin. Expressing myself being naked or posing in sexy clothes has been my most real, raw, vulnerable, and authentic self. Seeing myself published in a magazine is still mind blowing. I took small steps, to face my fears and found freedom in my own self-expression.

We absolutely love your Instagram, your content is very dynamic, inspirational, and downright sexy, could you perhaps tell us what your personal experience as an influencer has been like? It has been fun, powerful and a way to be creative. I have been able to connect with fans, other models and photographers. Can't wait to see what happens after this issue comes out.

3 things that you can't go a day without. Music, shoes and...

What about those crazy DMs you must receive! Care to share a few funny stories regarding those? The first one that

deserves a mention is this one "I need you to call me right now. (Then gave number) I need information on how you pick the person you want to be intimate with? I met someone but I'm not sure if I want to be with them. I mean if you want to be with me then I wouldn't be with them."

2nd one

"I was wondering if you would go to a high school reunion with me. You could pretend that you were in my grade. People would really fall for it and try to figure out who you were because you're so beautiful. After a while you could kiss me and tell them that I had been your boyfriend for years. Finally, after people try to figure out who you were, pretend like they know who you are. We would tell them that I met you on social media."

Now we're sure you experience a lot of male attention on and offline, any advice you would like to give to men out there who are hoping to catch your eye the right way? My advice to men- I like a when someone makes me laugh (not put me down) a sense of humor. Someone who pays attention to details, like what o like to drink. A gentleman not necessarily just good manners, although some of those do help. I mean being honest, finding time for me, and making me feel special.

What is the absolute worst thing a man can do to completely put you off? Things that will turn me off men who send mix signals. Poor self-confidence or continuous bad self-talk. Glass is always half empty type. Be on the phone most of the date.

That said, what advice would you have to give to all women out there when it comes to love and relationships. Chivalry still has a place. Allow a man to be masculine, it brings out your feminine. Show your gratitude towards your partner. If he did something you liked to thank him. Let him know you appreciate what he did, or he is doing. Don't take each other for granted. Go on dates have fun, enjoy your partner.

Thank you so much for sitting down with us and letting us get to know you! Any last words for our readers out there? I love exercising and taking care of my body. I also like to take care of my mind and remember the great things about my life. My family, my friends and all the people who have supported me on my journey.





PLAYMATE





PLAYMATE





ON THIN ICE

A social-media-fueled tourism boom saved Iceland from economic ruin. A decade later, is it leading the country to environmental collapse?

BY CIARA O'ROURKE

Selfie sticks punch the sky as three women bob through the milky-blue water. They look like knights charging against a strong wind, but they're young and they're American and they persevere. Their hair is piled high on their heads, and they purse their lips as they gaze up at their iPhones. Behind them, a man takes photo after photo of his partner as she swans in small circles. She reviews the shots with a severe expression as he shields the screen from the sun.

When their images post to Instagram, they will all appear to be alone in this otherworldly watering hole, the Blue Lagoon, situated about 45 minutes outside Reykjavik, Iceland's capital. In real life, they're surrounded by tourists from countries such as Pakistan, Algeria and Poland, all similarly posing in the steamy, geothermal seawater or making their way to the bar, where the first glass of sparkling wine is on the house.

The Blue Lagoon warns its patrons that it's important to stay hydrated while wading in the 100-degree, silica-heavy pool. Flowing on one side of the lagoon is a metal fountain etched with the words PURE ICELANDIC WATER to signal where visitors can fill their cups for free. If this seems like a marketing ploy to make local water sexy, it's working. One woman's eyes go wide as she tells me how great the tap water tastes in Iceland, better than back home. The country's tourism board playfully rebranded tap water as *Kranavatn*, a word that literally translates to "tap water."

Good marketing is behind Iceland's tourism boom. The country's seemingly pristine landscapes abound on social-media screens and draw more than 2 million visitors to its shores each year to hike behind thundering waterfalls or to see up close the canyon where Justin Bieber shot his "I'll Show You" music video. Some land at Keflavik International Airport — the main entry point for foreign travelers — because they're seeking something more ancient than the Colosseum in Rome, less defiled than Tulum. Others are here because they've seen Iceland's remote vistas on Facebook or on *Game of Thrones*, which often filmed here. But as the number of tourists has spiked, with yearly visitors outnumbering permanent residents sixfold, traditional systems have broken down. Locals know not to venture onto a glacier in sandals and to stay on designated paths when hiking. Visitors, in their attempts to get photos that don't feature other gawking tourists, traipse farther and farther off the trail, destroying plant life. Tourists pluck the words SEND NUDES in moss that will take decades to regrow.

The culprits in that very real crime against a hillside

are unknown, but you can picture them. News reports have warned about a crisis in the country, one that's overwhelming everything from hotels to national parks. Iceland's environment is fragile, and it's being threatened by too many travelers. But tourism helped yank the country out of an earlier crisis, buoying the economy after the debilitating collapse of 2008. And here I am, ready to experience a country whose rapidly expanding popularity may be permanently damaging what lured me here in the first place.

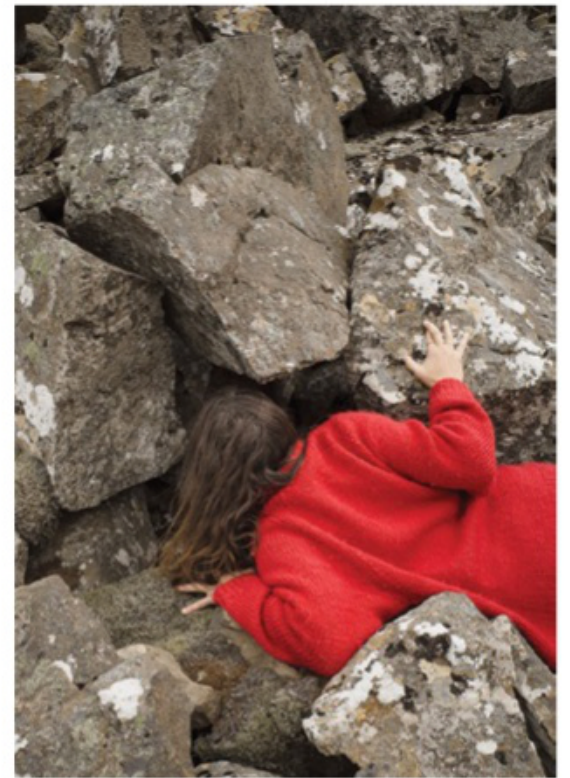
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I'm seated next to a man named Jason on my flight from Paris to Reykjavik in late June, and I tell him my plans for the next five days: Drive to a town near the Sólheimajökull glacier, which I'll climb with a tour group recommended on Trip Advisor, then drive to Reykjavik and visit the Blue Lagoon and the Golden Circle, a popular tourist route.

Normally I avoid talking to anyone on planes, but I notice Jason's driver's license is from Washington state, which leads us to discover that we graduated from the same college in the same

year. The coincidence does not feel so impressive when I recount the number of people I know who've visited Iceland in the past few years — nearly two dozen. One of my favorite stories: A woman was in a coffee shop in Reykjavik when she asked the person sitting next to her to scoot over. In a country with only about 350,000 residents, perhaps it's also not so remarkable that the woman was Björk.

Tourism has played a vital role in helping Iceland recover from the 2008 economic crash, says Sigríður Dögg Guðmundsdóttir, a spokesperson for Visit Iceland and



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHANTAL ANDERSON



Some residents feel Iceland has become a cartoon of itself.

Left: Situated on the south coast, Reynisfjara is one of Iceland's most visited black-sand beaches. Acclaimed for its beauty, the beach is also notoriously dangerous due to the water's strong undertow.

a sort of hype-woman for the country. The industry has grown rapidly, from fewer than 500,000 visitors in 2010 to 2.2 million in 2018. The country used to be a landing pad for planes to refuel before heading on to Europe or North America. But Icelandair and, before it collapsed in March, WOW Air, offered stopover deals that helped secure Iceland as a travel destination.

In some ways that growth has been a boon, Guðmundsdóttir says. Restaurants and other services have opened in rural areas, where residents now have entrepreneurial opportunities that didn't exist before the tourism explosion.

"People are able to move back into the towns and villages they grew up in because they can create jobs for themselves," she says. Höfn, a town of barely 2,000 where Guðmundsdóttir used to live, now supports a large grocery store and three restaurants — amenities that locals alone couldn't sustain.

But the influx of tourists has also strained infrastructure, she says, especially at the most-trafficked sites, including the Golden Circle. The canyon from Bieber's music video, which has almost half a billion views on YouTube, closed temporarily after Beliebers from across the globe overran it, destroying delicate vegetation. Another hiking spot, Reykjadalur, also went dark after Iceland's environmental agency decided it had been endangered by tourists. A 2018 report from the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Innovation says beloved vistas including the Dverghamrar basalt columns and the Gullfoss waterfall are all at risk of damage.

Some of these sites were simply never meant to be popular. The country has an "Icelandic Pledge" that it encourages tourists to take, promising to travel responsibly, camp at campsites and so on. The tap water campaign aimed at tourists is a national effort to cut back on plastic bottles. At gas stations, Styrofoam and paper cups, ubiquitous in the United States, are hard to come by. If you want a coffee to go, you'll often need to bring your own mug or buy a reusable one.

Iceland chairs the Arctic Council and holds the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, and one of its three focuses for the latter is sustainable tourism, including "decarbonization" of the industry. A member of the Paris Agreement, the country aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent of 1990 levels by 2030 and be carbon neutral by 2040. A 50 percent increase to its 2010 carbon tax went into effect last year. Iceland also wants to electrify its vehicle fleet. The impacts of climate change are already apparent, says Guðmundsdóttir. But, she

adds, "there's a really strong will in Iceland to preserve nature and maintain tourism as a sustainable industry."

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It's bright and cold when I land in Keflavik. It's summertime, so the sun won't set till around midnight. Driving on near-empty roads to my Airbnb near Hvalsöllum, I pass purple Alaska lupines, an invasive plant species, blanketing the rolling, rocky hills. There are as many tour buses barreling down the Ring Road, the route that loops the country, as there are cars. Navigating through small towns I see hostels and buildings with Airbnb logos affixed to the windows.

The waterfall by my Airbnb, which you might know as #skogafoss, is majestic. Campers have set up tents near the base, and a woman is furiously adjusting her selfie stick in the spray while climbing the hundreds of steps to the top. As lambs gallop down the grass beside the stairs, the place feels peaceful, even private. I could see the waterfall from a nearby restaurant, which seems emblematic of how tourism affects rural towns — part of the cottage industry supporting the interlopers who are changing these communities.

It's still light when I fall asleep at the Airbnb. A chicken coop backs up to the guesthouse, but the rooster never crows. The next day, my host smiles gently as



Left: The Icelandic horse has lived on the island since the 10th century; today it's bred for sheepherding, competition and leisure riding. **Middle:** Vandalism to plant life has become a concern following increasing reports of intentional destruction. **Bottom:** Landmannalaugar, a popular hiking destination, is surrounded by mountains and obsidian lava fields.

she presents breakfast: bread made with barley from their farm, homemade dandelion and rhubarb jams, Angelica pesto and lamb paté. The eggs are from their chickens, the milk from their cows. Seated around the table are more people from the U.S., including women from California, Florida and Seattle and a man from New York City. He was in Europe for work but took advantage of the stopover and is visiting Iceland for about 48 hours.

Judy Butler is in Iceland because the airfare to Ireland from her home in Kittery, Maine was too expensive, plus a lot of her colleagues at the school where she teaches English have been here and liked it. Butler and I soon depart for the Sólheimajökull glacier. The trail leads us through an ash-covered icescape that our guide, a British man named Simon Rees, calls Mordor. The ash, left over from past volcanic eruptions, insulates the ice, forming dark peaks and valleys near the water's edge.

"First chance for photos for all you instagrammers," Rees says after a few minutes of walking. The actor who plays Jaime Lannister on *Game of Thrones* posted a selfie he took on Sólheimajökull, Rees says before encouraging us to ask him questions about glaciers. Or the TV show. I ask about the show. First he tells me he didn't like the ending. Then he points to a sign hammered into the earth that marks where the glacier reached back in 2010. According to Rees, it's one of the fastest disappearing in Europe.

"And I'll leave it up to you to decide why," he says, skirting any conversations about climate change. (Soon after my trip, the Copernicus Climate Change Service reports that July was the hottest month ever recorded on Earth.) In brief, he tells us, there's less snow in the winter and more melt in the summer. The same amount of ice has



disappeared in the past 10 years as in the past 100. Icebergs sticking out of the lagoon like meringue won't exist by the end of this summer, he says, and he notices more breaking off all the time. Later, he shows me a photo a friend of his took from the same spot in September 2018. There was a wall of ice. Now there's water. Tour guides will need to jump the stream, he says, and then build a bridge.



Above: Jökulsárlón is Iceland's most tourist-friendly glacial lagoon and, with a depth of 814 feet, also its deepest lake — a result of glacial retreat due to rising temperatures spurred by climate change.

“Eventually we won't be able to get here at all.” Retreating glaciers can be increasingly hard to access, says Nathan Reigner, an Arctic Fulbright Scholar in Reykjavik, but the glacial melt is also creating new sites, like the Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon that formed when glaciers calved and melted along the south coast. As more of these sites have emerged, he says, there has been an “arms race” for who can develop tourism businesses to meet the skyrocketing demand. What one study early in the tourism boom called a “surprising lack of planning and control at the national level” led to a spate of visitors and tour companies that were ignorant of environmental sustainability guidelines.

Reigner is a recreation and tourism consultant with a background in park management, concentrating in part on crowding, capacity and conflict. At a coffee shop in downtown Reykjavik he gives me a primer on Icelandic tourism.

To wit: Tourists have been coming to Iceland since the 19th century. At first it was rich Europeans. By 2008, when the economy crashed, the country hosted about 500,000 visitors a year. The financial crisis's encore was the volcanic eruption that grounded flights on the continent for weeks.

But the krona, already a volatile currency, was down steeply against the dollar. It became cheap to venture here, and Visit Iceland, the country's official tourism arm, rallied to save the 2010 summer tourism season. It worked. By 2013, about 800,000 people were landing in the country each year; by 2017, more than 2.2 million.

As adventure-seekers visited Iceland and exposed their friends and family (or followers) to images of the country, those places became destinations. And Iceland didn't have the structures it needed to support the surge. A range of goods and services have followed the tourists to towns of all sizes. Even Reykjavik has more bars, Reigner says. Locals are



Above: At about 40,000 square miles, Iceland is roughly the same size as Kentucky. Outside the Ring Road, much sightseeing is done via hiking trails, which traverse the country across three national parks.

Below: Landmannalaugar (“People’s Pools” in Icelandic) is dotted with hot springs and serves as the starting point of the 34-mile Laugavegur hiking trail.



happy their swimming pools are open later.

During the summer, on any given day, about one in five people on the island are tourists, Reigner says. But as the krona regains its value, visitors are staying for fewer days. That means their land travel is limited. It might be more appealing to stay on, say, the Golden Circle than spend a day driving to a more remote coastal village. This causes problems by concentrating the environmental footprint within a small area. Distributing tourists more evenly across the country can reduce the negative impacts. For example, Keflavik airport currently centers traffic in the country’s southwest region, so in 2015 the government resolved to develop new flight routes to lesserknown airports, such as Akureyri in the northeast.

Icelanders are split on how much the tourism industry benefits their communities. Generally they’re happy with it, but some feel priced out or crowded out, Reigner says. Others feel Iceland has become a cartoon of itself. The government developed a plan to collect reliable data to improve transportation, infrastructure and more. And, Reigner says, they’ve been largely successful. By looking at issues including freshwater, wastewater, nature sites and carbon footprints, the country seems to be tackling the conflicts that stem from tourism. Still, many Icelanders believe tourists “spoil” nature. I ask Reigner if he agrees. He leans back in his chair and thinks for a second.

“Intensive use,” he says, “requires intensive management.” He goes on to say that no “management machine” could have coped with the rapid growth of tourism in Iceland.

“It’s not that people did a bad job,” he says. “It’s that the job is impossible.”

When Reigner first visited Iceland, in 2015, he thought it was a playground. Now he thinks about it more holistically. He wishes he could help tourists

connect more with the culture, a challenge on a weeklong or weekend trip. Being a tourist means going somewhere to find meaning for yourself, but in doing so you also change the meaning of a place.

Reykjavik surely feels changed, though compared with when, I don’t know. The waiter at a downtown restaurant speaks English to me before I say anything. More Americans stumble in, and a Japanese man at the table next to mine demands the wi-fi password. Watching the people pass by outside, I wonder if any of them are from here.

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By the time everyone has boarded the Arctic Adventures minibus for the Golden Circle tour that ferries tourists from Thingvellir National Park to the Geysir geothermal area to the Gullfoss waterfall, 12 of us are buckled in, plus our guide, Heimir. Nine are from the United States and five, including me, live in Texas. A couple from San Antonio tells me about a cave they visited that may be closed because tourists keep scrawling their names in the bacteria covering its walls. The guide showed them one such graffiti from 2006 that’s still visible today. Cori Clymer, who’s here from Philadelphia to celebrate her 50th birthday with her mom, passes around a dried fish snack. Michelle Brinker, from Houston, takes my photo at the national park, a UNESCO world heritage site with a parking lot full of sightseeing buses. One tourist climbs over the rope installed to keep visitors away from a cliff. He wants a better photo.

One story Heimir tells us about tourists sits with me longer than the rest. It dates to the early 2000s, before the tourism boom. People hoping to see a UFO land on a glacier had descended on Reykjavik, renting cars and driving into the rural countryside. Many ran out of gas before they could find filling stations. Others showed up at overbooked hotels. The region wasn’t equipped to host so many people at once, but farmers opened their doors and welcomed the ignorant travelers. That same hospitality is on show today among Airbnb hosts and restaurant servers who patiently wait while I fumble to find the correct amount of krona to pay for a meal. For my final dinner in Iceland I eat at Skál, in a food hall in Reykjavik. (An American suggested it.) Sitting at the bar, I order a skirt steak that another American, sitting nearby, recommended. After it’s placed in front of me, the woman next to me nods and smiles. I feel as though I’ve finally earned a local’s approval, but when she speaks, it’s clear she’s American.

“So good,” she says. Then she pulls out her phone. ■

20 / Q

THOMAS MIDDLEDITCH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIAN BUCHAN

AHEAD OF *SILICON VALLEY*'S FINAL SEASON, THE EMMYNOMINATED STAR OPENS UP ABOUT THE UNEXPECTED FROM HIS DREAM ROLES TO SEXUAL EXPLORATION TO SHOOTING GUNS WITH ALEX JONES

BY
**RYAN
GAJEWSKI**

Q1: *The real Silicon Valley has changed drastically since Silicon Valley debuted on HBO in 2014. Would it be a different show if it were starting now?*

MIDDLEDITCH: I really don't know, but I do wonder if this show has had anything to do with the consciousness of that. Season six will deal with privacy issues: Richard is pushing a new, decentralized internet where no one tracks or sells user data.

Q2: *The show has been nominated for a best comedy Emmy for the five preceding seasons but has never won. You've been nominated for best actor once. As you head into the final season, does it seem like Silicon Valley has always been HBO's bridesmaid?*

MIDDLEDITCH: I always figured the most I would get would be a nomination. Even if you've told yourself that this is all stupid, when you lose you're like, "I shouldn't be bummed, but I am quite sad about it." I'm sure HBO would rather have the show go on for a few more seasons, but our showrunners are like, "No, this is the story."

Q3: *With Silicon Valley, Veep and Game of Thrones each having their swan songs this year, is anyone at HBO thinking, Shit, we're losing all our great shows?*

MIDDLEDITCH: The TV landscape in general is figuring out how to compete in the new world of television. Players like Netflix have forced everyone to reinvent themselves. I don't think anyone is panicked — I mean, they're cleaning house with *Game of Thrones*, but HBO is a prestige network. In the end, a network has to have just one good thing that people watch in order to get awards.

Q4: *Having left Facebook and Twitter, you're presumably not a fan of Mark Zuckerberg or Jack Dorsey. Do you agree with Elizabeth Warren and other presidential hopefuls who want to break up Facebook, Amazon and other tech giants?*

MIDDLEDITCH: It's a great idea. And no, I'm not a huge fan of Zuckerberg and Dorsey, but I don't like to slight them either. Without selling user data, it's not a viable business. And I still have Instagram. Also, I was never really good at Twitter, to be honest.

Q5: *Do you have a fear of the unknown, post-Silicon Valley?*

MIDDLEDITCH: Of course I do. When something is successful, you're like, Okay, how do we figure out how to keep it going a little longer? There are 4 million shows; we're definitely not the biggest, but people watch us, which is nice. It's a challenge when you're involved in something to make the decision to end

it. It's hard to shoot Old Yeller — not that we're Old Yeller, because that would imply we're a sick dog. It's more like crawling into your best friend's window and murdering them. It's hard to do that when you don't know what comes afterward. Even if everyone who's involved in the show is guaranteed work, will it be the same type of work?

Q6: *Has your role in this year's Godzilla: King of the Monsters changed your standing in Hollywood?*

MIDDLEDITCH: I think so. Unless you're ordained as an attractive teen, it's hard to get crazy fame right out of the gate. I would love to do big movies all the time or work with great filmmakers; I would love to star on Amazon's *Lord of the Rings* series and transform as the Riddler in a new *Batman*. I don't think about it analytically, though, because it makes you feel as though you've taken a bath in oil. I just try to do good work so that when I have early-onset Alzheimer's and I'm looking at my IMDb page and my wife tells me, "That's you," I can register that I did some cool shit.

Q7: *You and one of the Godzilla writers visited a swingers club with your partners during production. Are you and Mollie, your wife of four years, familiar with the swinging scene?*

MIDDLEDITCH: I don't know how much I can say, because I don't want my wife to be mad at me. Only after I got married was I like, "Mollie, I'm sorry, but we have to get nontraditional here." To her credit, instead of saying "Fuck you, I'm out," she was like, "Let's figure this out." To be honest, swinging has saved our marriage. We have different speeds, and we argue over it constantly, but it's better than feeling unheard and alone and that you have to scurry in the shadows. By the way, it's now called being "part of the lifestyle." The term *swinging* is old.

Q8: *Is being "part of the lifestyle" something you've always been interested in?*

MIDDLEDITCH: Absolutely not. I self-deprecatingly call myself a pervert, but that's not what it is. I just like it. I'm sexual. I'd always thought I was a romantic and that when I fall in love, that stuff fades away. It does for some years — enough to be like, "I should get married, and I'll be different." But it's part of me. If that's part of your being and it feels important to you, find a way to explore it, because repression sucks.

Q9: *Do you have any advice for couples who may be exploring that lifestyle?*

MIDDLEDITCH: For anything sexual — whether in terms of the sex act or identity or kink — you want to

know where the walls of the box are. Mollie and I have created our own rules, and compared to most of the people we've met who do this kind of shit, our rules are strict. We're not off on our own; we're together, a unit. It's a perpetual state of management and communication, to the point where it's like, "All right, we've got to stop. Chill." I'm gas, and she's brakes. This is actually the premise for a comedy series we're writing together.

Q10: *How do you identify?*

MIDDLEITCH: Pretty vanilla, probably cis-hetero. Even if I've witnessed situations that may not be for me, I want to witness them anyway. I'm of the mentality "We're only here once." I don't believe in reincarnation or an afterlife, any of that shit. If I look around, I actually see a lot of shit that makes me sad about the world. This is a positive way of connecting with people and experiencing things on a very selfish level.

I've also been to some weird parties that were very *Eyes Wide Shut*, from which I walked away thinking, I don't need it, but I'm glad I saw that. I've seen some dicks, I've seen some butts, I've seen some tits. It's weird — I've totally gotten to the point where I can see a dick and just be like, "Nice hog, buddy." [laughs] And it's not weird. "Man, I'm jealous. Good stuff." I'd like to have gone to the Playboy Mansion, just to have the knowledge. Myself and a lot of other people who start on this journey don't know where they're at in it. They're going, "I think I just need a thing to happen. All I know is, this particular situation is hard." I love my wife like I've never loved anyone before. With two people who feel that way about each other, how do you go down that road? It's tough. Bring a therapist along for the ride.

Q11: *Are you concerned that speaking about this publicly could inadvertently make you a face of the lifestyle?*

MIDDLEITCH: I would be honored to be the face of something. I don't give a fuck, but my wife is more private, so I have to juggle that. I don't think I would ever be the face of a full-tilt, yourbody-is-my-body lifestyle. The perception is that you open up that door and it's *Eyes Wide Shut*, which isn't necessarily the case. You can go to that party, of course. You pay the fee, you'll go. [laughs] My mantra is, How can I explore this with a 1960s, peace-and-love, full-understanding, everyone's-connected-andfeels-good kind of way? Not every corner is explored, but you have to be patient. I battle my own needs. Sometimes I'm a ravenous little monster, and how do I calm that down?

Q12: *Are you comfortable with your body?*

MIDDLEITCH: I am, but I'm 37 now, and there are moments lately when I've been having body-image issues. Not many people talk about it being okay for a guy to want to feel sexy. Typically it's "Get fucking swole!" No, I want to look in the mirror and know that I have some semblance of a jaw line and feel confident. No one really talks about the fact that guys don't always feel that. It's okay for boys to want to feel pretty.

Q13: *You've said that you first had the experience of fans wanting to sleep with you as a Second City improv performer on cruise ships. Has that sort of attention increased?*

MIDDLEITCH: Personally, that's one of the trickier elements of it all, because Mollie doesn't get that and yet she has to witness it. I'm like, "Come on, what about this chick who's obviously really into me?" And Mollie will say, "Yeah, she's into *you*. Where do I fit in?" That question comes up. There's a lot of negotiation, and adding

fame sometimes makes it easier and sometimes complicates things.

That's the forever-changing landscape in our relationship, because it's about everybody feeling safe. The internet is a possibility for meeting people, but Instagram fucks up marriages. If your partner brings this very forward person from Instagram to you, you'll be like, "Do you guys have a thing?" Whereas if your partner bumps into someone and they start a conversation, it all happens in front of you. It's a game of inches on a minefield to try to predict who's going to feel safe. My first concern is Mollie. Anything that happens has to be run by the queen.

Q14: *You're a fan of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. Explain that show's greatness to people who hate on it or who've never seen it.*

MIDDLEITCH: The fun of it is thinking, What would I do? I always think about how utterly difficult it would be for me to survive in that house with all those alphas. Not that I'm not an alpha. I don't perceive myself as a beta or a submissive little bitch — or whatever the fuck betas are supposed to be. But who am I going to joke around with? Even though I know I'm funny and cool, would that person even look at me when compared to all the boneheads? My wife's like, "I think you'd fucking get voted off first," and I'm like, "Me too." [laughs]

Q15: *A 2018 *Hollywood Reporter* cover story featured the cast of *Silicon Valley* with the headline TRIUMPH OF THE BETA MALE, which led to a rant by Alex Jones about modern masculinity. How does it feel to piss off Jones?*

MIDDLEITCH: Hilarious. I shot guns with him and my friend at this ranch in Texas maybe six years ago. This was before Infowars got big, and I didn't really know who he was. If I hadn't later learned that he constantly spews awful nonsense, I would have been like, "That guy was super nice." It made me think, Does he really believe all that shit? Because if he's really saying all that just to sell protein powder, he's a diabolical motherfucker. I'm so glad YouTube removed him. There should be more accountability. I don't want to censor everybody, but I want to fucking censor some.

Q16: *You were bullied growing up and have dealt with depression over the years. Is there still pain in that?*

MIDDLEITCH: It's all part of the path. There were things that were painful, for sure, but I'd rather have that happen versus me being the aggressor. I was catching up with a hometown friend, and she said, "You were really mean to me when I was a kid." I was like, "I didn't even know — I'm so sorry. If only you knew I had a crush on you the whole time."

Q17: *How have success and fame changed the way you cope with those emotions?*

MIDDLEITCH: Success has changed everything. Fame is something that guarantees change, even if I don't have Pirates of the Caribbean fame like Orlando Bloom. But there's no way to go through fame without it changing you. It's more about how you respond to it and how elastic you are — if you're able to go back to who you really are. Fame becomes dangerous only when you start believing the hype and believing you're a special person above the normal tier of people. And that's hard to avoid because of all the times you get to go to the front of the line. It's difficult not to think, Oh, I am totally special.

Q18: *How does fame affect friendships? You and your former co-star T.J. Miller were once close, right?*



MIDDLEDITCH: Everyone reacts differently to fame. It's a shame. T.J. is very funny. Whatever he's doing or whatever he wants to do, I wish him success. I'm not going to get into whatever happened. We just stopped seeing eye-to-eye. I'm not the only one he doesn't see eye-to-eye with.

Q19: *You're in **Zombieland: Double Tap**, out in October. Do you have the skills to survive a zombie apocalypse?*

MIDDLEDITCH: I'm an instrument-rated private pilot. I'd been wanting to fly since I was 14 or 15 years old, when I got into military history and aviation and PC flight simulators. So if you have a bunker in Montana, save me a bed. I'll get you there.

Q20: *Do you think the public knows the real you?*

MIDDLEDITCH: Look, I play a ton of video games, but there are other parts of me. There's going to hockey games and flying airplanes. There's a bit of a hippie in me, because I was raised in Nelson, British Columbia, a hippie town. As much as I enjoy spending an entire weekend playing computer games, I also like to take mushrooms and drink rainwater off a tree. It's all important. ■

**THERE'S NO
WAY TO GO
THROUGH
FAME
WITHOUT IT
CHANGING
YOU.**



STACY MUSSELMAN

Instagram @drstacymusselman



Photography by **Kevin Talley** | [@kevintalleyphoto](#)









Such an absolute honor to have you on Playboy! Talk to us about your career and what made you get into the industry?

First, thank you for having me and the privilege to showcase my Quantum Care to your readers. Early on in my professional career I noticed that people were not living at their optimal levels. Influences like stress, lack of exercise and unhealthy lifestyle were taking their toll on people of all ages. During my dissertation research, I discovered comprehensive bloodwork holds many secrets and that fascinated me. The answers were in the bloodwork the whole time? The answer was most likely YES! It my goal to share this with the world and help everyone feel their optimal best. I went on to complete post graduate work and certification in functional blood chemistry analysis. My Quantum Care program was built around analysis of comprehensive bloodwork, easy to understand color coded reports and natural protocols. Most people rely on doctors and medicine when they are in crisis and prescribed treatments that can have adverse side effects. That medical model seemed off to me. Why wait until extreme dysfunction presents itself, when proper analysis of the patterns and trends in bloodwork can reveal the probability of dysfunction sometimes far before symptoms present discomfort. Allopathic medicine primarily is not proactive, but reactive and very rarely addresses the root of the issue nor the environment that brought on the state of disease or discomfort. I identified through bloodwork, that somewhere between dysfunction and optimal health there are many questions. The answers were to quantify an individual's unique needs and create a personalized protocol for them to achieve a higher quality of life. Quantum Care allows you to do what you want with your health, not what you have to.

What is your favorite thing to do? Candidly, to empower people to discover that they can enjoy incredible health, energy and an intense sex drive. Turning the light on for others....just turns me on.

What does it mean for you to be seen as a strong, intelligent, ambitious woman? It makes me feel powerful and incredibly sexy to know that I live every day practicing what I preach. I walk the walk and talk the talk.

What would you say makes you stand out in the industry?

My unique approach in analyzing over 100 biomarkers in each individuals blood work, provides me an insight that is generally overlooked by the average doctor. By uncovering specific trends, I can identify the reasons preventing them for living their best, most optimal life.

What puts the biggest smile on your face?

When a patient has that "Ah-Ha Moment" when they experience the Quantum Shift. They realize that their health and wellbeing is in their own hands and can take control to transform themselves from ordinary to extraordinary.

What are some of your biggest passions?

Health and Wellness, dogs, horses, a summer thunderstorm, and sadly shopping... lol.

3 ultimate deal breakers when it comes to men?

- Ridged thinking. A man's greatness is limitless. If a man is not open to expand his potential of higher self, that is a big deal breaker. Self-imposed boundaries based on antiquated idealisms are a speed bump on the road to happiness. Personal growth and development through life are paramount and we are all works in progress.
- Bad manners and that includes rude or mistreatment of anyone at events, restaurants, stores etc. We all get dressed the same way in the morning, 1 leg at time. How a person treats others is a window to the soul.
- No magic in the moment. That tingle a man can give with a touch, a kiss or even an entrancing wink from across the room. Intimacy should create sparks and with the right person, fireworks are possible.

What are some of the things that attract you to a man?

- Self-actualization. A great man has great power. Nothing turns me on more than a man aware of his true potential and doing the work to achieve his ideal self, even at the minutest level.
- The sexiest thing a man can wear is his smile. We choose how we react and choosing happiness is a monster turn-on.
- When a guy is comfortable in his own skin. There is power in presence and

how a man carries himself with comfortable ease is very sexy.

What is the most daring thing you have ever done?

I could tell you but then I'd have to kill you. Most recently, THIS! Putting myself on display with the understanding that not everyone is comfortable in their own skin or looking at others for that matter. I AM! I am comfortable naked and love being naked! Business attires is just that... it hits floor as soon as I walk in the door. Nothing feels better than the transition from business suit to birthday suit. I am completely comfortable in my own skin and want others to be as well. My Quantum Care program is all about being real with who you are and accomplishing your goals realistically. I want everyone to feel sexy in their own skin, comfortable with their bodies and grateful for the opportunity to change with the knowledge that my comprehensive panels provided. I believe that when people are aware of the probability of dysfunction in their body, which is paramount with my Quantum Care program, they will make changes to live a healthier more optimal life. The current medical model in the US is like looking through a peep hole giving a very tiny glimpse of your health with the door only to be opened to a synthetic treatment. The Quantum Care reveals everything. Why look through a peep hole when you can get the "Full Monty"

What is the best way to approach you as an admirer?

Directly! If you walk the walk and talk the talk, it's an amazing start.

Where can our readers catch up with you and stay updated with your work?

You can view my website at YourQuantumCare.com to book a consultation, read some of our many testimonials and press releases. Instagram

We are so happy to have gotten to know you a little bit! Any last words out there for our readers?

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A close-up portrait of Chef Andrea Drummer, a Black woman with her hair in braids, looking slightly to the side. The image is bathed in warm, golden light. The title 'HIGH DINNER' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

HIGH

DINNER

AMERICA'S FIRST
FINEDINING CANNABIS
RESTAURANT IS SURE TO
LIGHT UP LOS ANGELES. BUT
WILL THE ACTIVISM THAT
CHEF ANDREA DRUMMER
INFUSES INTO EVERY BITE
TRANSFORM THE INDUSTRY?

BY MICHELLE LHOOG

“ADVOCACY AND CANNABIS— THEY GO HAND IN HAND.”

Chef Andrea Drummer puts the final touches on a friedchicken sandwich while her sous-chef flits around the kitchen, popping ingredients into the fryer. “This brine is nice,” Drummer says, taking a bite of a pickle. “But see this?” She pokes at the bread collapsing under the weight of coleslaw and the hunk of meat. “This should never happen.” She turns to me and sighs. “This sandwich needs more work.”

It’s a scene like countless others in the tense, giddy lead-up to a restaurant’s opening night — but the establishment in this case is Lowell Farms: A Cannabis Café, the first legal cannabis restaurant in the United States. “It’s intimidating,” the 47-year-old chef confesses.

In the stuffy kitchen of the under-construction site in West Hollywood, California, Drummer has been experimenting all week in preparation for the fall opening. Despite the pressure, she appears calm and focused as she stands by the stove in a dark denim apron, a red bandanna holding her hair and beaded bracelets decorating her wrists.

“There are a lot of eyes on me,” Drummer says softly over the din of carpenters and kitchen fans. “I want to do right by everyone.”

• • •

The restaurant, co-owned by cannabis cultivators Lowell Herb Co., marks a shift in an industry hoping to appeal to a market that includes college kids as well as their parents and grandparents — and an industry with a long history of racial tensions and high incarceration rates. Eleven states have legalized recreational marijuana use since 2012, and though the industry raked in a total of \$10.4 billion in 2018 and is projected to be worth \$32 billion globally by 2022, there’s still plenty of room for social integration. And that’s just what this fine-dining experience offers.

Residents of those 11 states may be open to cannabis consumption but turned off by the common perception of legal bud culture: going to a dispensary where young stoners present you with overpriced pre-rolls; returning home to sit in front of your television and giggle for no reason. But “we all eat,” Drummer notes. “I think it’s important to engage with cannabis the same way a person does when they go out for martinis.” The Lowell café will not serve alcohol, so the restaurant will be a pioneering experiment in which cannabis is the main social lubricant — testing Drummer’s theory that sharing a meal and getting high are both communal experiences that have the power to help people connect.

When the eatery opens this fall, cannabis sommeliers will tend to each dining party to suggest food and strain pairings based on individual preferences. Diners will then have the option of enjoying joints or vaporizers before and during their meal. “We’re trying to focus on the idea that it’s going to be approachable for many different people, so the entire place will have overgrown living walls — very

aromatic, very lush,” says restaurant director Kevin Brady, who goes on to praise Drummer’s attention to detail and longtime contributions to the Lowell brand. “Andrea has been partnered with Lowell from the beginning, when we petitioned the city for a license [in 2016],” he says.

Drummer carefully considers how each strain pairs with a given dish. “I think of the cannabis as I would rosemary or mint — the flavor profile, the notes, if the strain is more pungent or more mild,” she says. “It’s very farm-to-table in every respect, with our food and with the bud.” She goes on to explain how she’ll create dishes to complement both the flavors and the psychoactive effects of whatever strain is “in season.” Blue Dream, for example, pairs well with sweet and savory dishes alike due to its mild flavor and notes of blueberry. Drummer adds that the strain elicits an uplifting high that you might associate with dessert, so she’s thinking about pairing it with cereal-milk ice cream sandwiches. She’s also creating dishes with stronger flavors: “When you consume cannabis, your senses are heightened, so the food’s flavor profile is very forward. It’s not a muted palate.”

Drummer views the Lowell café as her opportunity to elevate cannabis-food pairing into a culinary art — and to eventually bring cannabis-infused concoctions to the menu. The café had initially planned to serve Drummer’s gourmet edibles, but current laws forced the company to pivot. “The state legislature is still formulating its policy around cannabis infusions. It’s unclear, and we’d rather take the conservative approach,” Brady says, noting that prepackaged edibles will be available for purchase. “We’re still working to figure out what those next steps look like.”



While the market for legal edibles — think gummies and brownies — has more than doubled since 2011, the products are extremely difficult to regulate. Dosages are unpredictable, and potential toxins have reportedly come up as a result of extraction technology. Meanwhile, the underground cannabis dinner events that continue to appear throughout the country come with problems of their own: A seat at the table can cost more than \$100, and the addition of cannabis can feel like a profit-grubbing afterthought. Still, Drummer notes, compared with the combination of alcohol and food, “cannabis is kinder” if it’s done right. When she cooks with cannabis, she often finds herself listening from the kitchen for a shift in tone once the effects hit her diners. “I hear the cadence go up in such a beautiful way,” she says. “It’s like a symphony.”

But even Drummer had to be convinced of the powers of the bud. “I grew up in the South, where there are certain things you don’t talk about, and that influenced the direction of my career initially,” she says. Raised in a strict Baptist family in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, she was fascinated with food from an early age but thought everyone who indulged in cannabis was lazy. Ironically, she worked as a “very anti-cannabis” drug counselor from 1997 until 2005. It wasn’t until she moved to California in late 2007 that her mind changed: Drummer found herself working for a weed-friendly attorney who proved that people who partake can be successful. When she later suffered from sciatica, the near-instant back relief cannabis offered meant she could pursue her passion as a professional chef. In 2009 she enrolled at Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Pasadena, and by 2012 she’d founded her cannabis dinner service, Elevation VIP Cooperative. “It liberated me,” she says of her career pivot.

The Lowell Herb Co. team met Drummer at an event in 2016. The brand was impressed by Drummer’s experience under celebrity chefs such as Thomas Keller of the French Laundry. Her work as an outspoken cannabis advocate sealed the deal. “Advocacy and cannabis — they go hand in hand,” Drummer says. During our conversation over the hot (and getting hotter) stove, she points to the company’s social-equity programs, such as last year’s billboards in downtown Los Angeles that advertised jobs for nonviolent cannabis offenders.

“What was important to me was the team they assembled and how diverse it was,” said Drummer at a UCLA “Being Black in Cannabis” panel in February, citing the company’s hiring practices. “They didn’t just offer me a job,” she added. “They offered me a partnership.”

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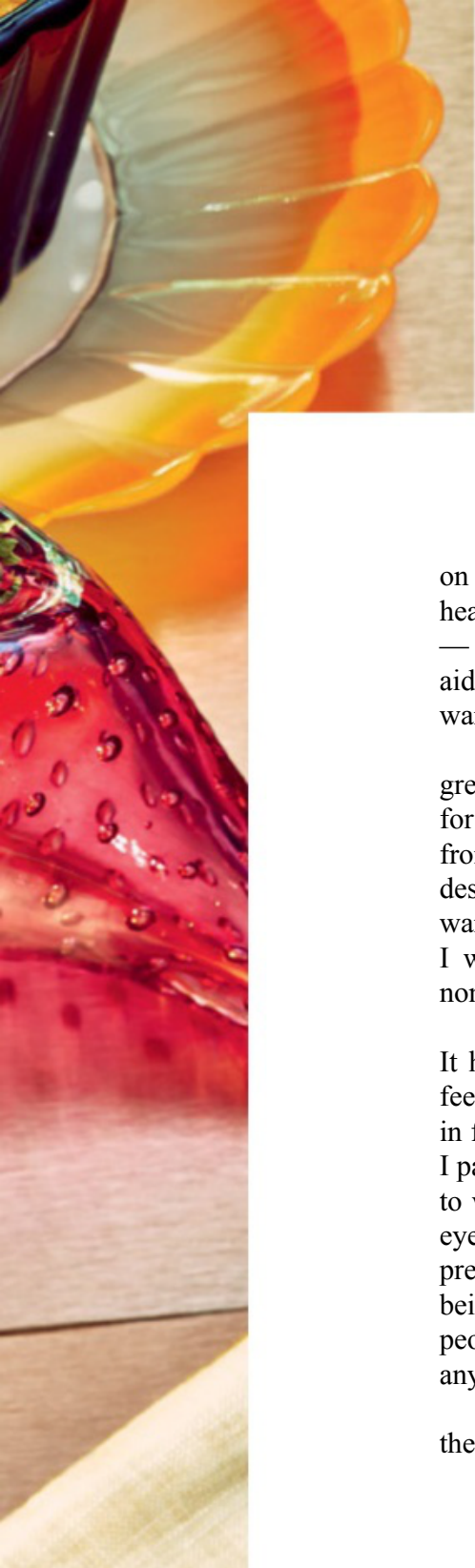
Drummer’s visibility as a black female chef matters. Since starting Elevation VIP she has worked her way to the top, including landing an appearance as a competitor on Netflix’s cannabis cooking show *Cooking on High* in 2018. Her name has appeared on lists of America’s top cannabis chefs, which is how her sous-chef, Rochelle Tyler, discovered her. “I was like, ‘Oh, that’s so cool, a black woman on the list,’” says Tyler, also a woman of color, who started working for Drummer after an introduction from a mutual friend. “She’s always speaking up for people like us.”

More than 80 percent of legal cannabis companies are under white ownership, while only about four percent are owned by black people. At the same time, cannabis arrests are rising in the U.S. On average, blacks are almost four times more likely to be arrested for cannabis than their white counterparts, despite roughly equal use. There is, however, a chance for cannabis legalization to be informed by social justice, if the people in power keep these disparities in mind. The House Judiciary Subcommittee



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRANT CORNETT





“IT’S A LOT OF PRESSURE, BUT WHAT’S THE ALTERNATIVE?”

on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security held its first hearing in July 2019 to discuss social equity in the industry — an early step toward mending prohibition’s damage and aiding communities disproportionately harmed by the drug war.

“If you’re in this industry and blind to the fact that a great number of black and brown people are incarcerated for doing the very thing we have the freedom to earn a living from, I would say shame on you,” Drummer says. The chef describes her vision of diversity-minded hiring practices: “I want to change the landscape of who we see in the industry. I would love for anyone who has been exonerated of a nonviolent cannabis crime to come and work in the kitchen.”

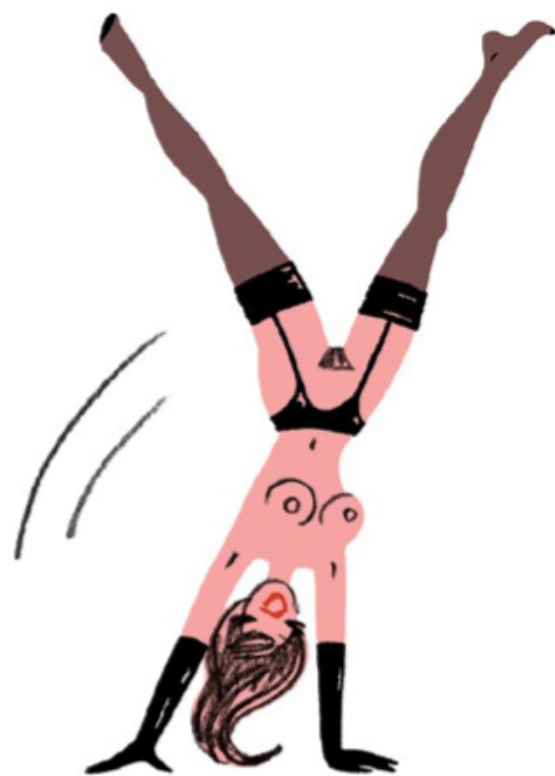
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It has been two hours since I arrived, and I’m starting to feel a little claustrophobic. But Drummer is still engrossed in food prep, now tinkering with the ice cream sandwiches. I pack up my things and make my way to the door, stopping to wish her luck. She grasps my hand and looks me in the eye. “I’m so scared,” she says in a low voice. “It’s a lot of pressure, but what’s the alternative? Sitting around and not being able to change the narrative? Not being able to hire people to be a part of this industry? Not having learned anything?”

She shakes her head. “So I’ll take it,” she says. “I’ll do the work so someone else doesn’t have to.” ■



PLAYBOY'S *party jokes*



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FEW FIERCELY FUNNY FRIENDS



SEX with me is like a trip to Epcot Center:
It sucks.—*I.K.*

I'M not saying men are desperate, but I
once said “I love the band Elton John”
on a date, and the man still slept with me.
—*Marcia Belsky*

I don't think of a man as an ally until he
hands me his unlocked cell phone and
walks out of the room.—*Bri Pruett*

THE year is 2055. An elderly husband and
wife are reading in bed. The wife turns
to the husband and says, “Kyle, I want
you to fuck me like you fucked me on our
wedding night.”

The husband puts his book down.
“Honey, I'd love to,” he says, “but I simply
don't have \$80,000 worth of student debt
for you to absorb anymore.”—*I.K.*

THREESOMES *sound* like a great idea, but so
does a boxing league of kangaroos.—
Amy Silverberg

POLYAMORY is a lot like a graduate program:
full of vegan parents scheduling
things.—*B.P.*

A taco salad is the perfect food for making
people think you're eating healthy: *Salad*
is right there in the name, but it's actually
just the biggest possible taco.—*I.K.*

I once dated a girl whose dog Rufus
would watch us having sex. Then I found
and destroyed his webcam, and that was
that.—*I.K.*

HAVING sex in your 30s is like being a
urologist: Mostly you're just telling men
their dicks are fine.—*B.P.*

A girl once told me she wanted to fuck
like we were in a porno, so I arranged for
my dad to marry her.—*I.K.*

OUR Unabashed Dictionary now includes
the following variations on the term
sexting....

Flexxing: Sexy texting at the gym.

Brexting: Sexy texting while legally
separating from the European Union.

Tex-mexting: Sexy texting with Bobby
Flay.

BDSMS: Sexy texting while wearing a
latex hood, and also your 4G went out.—
I.K.

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